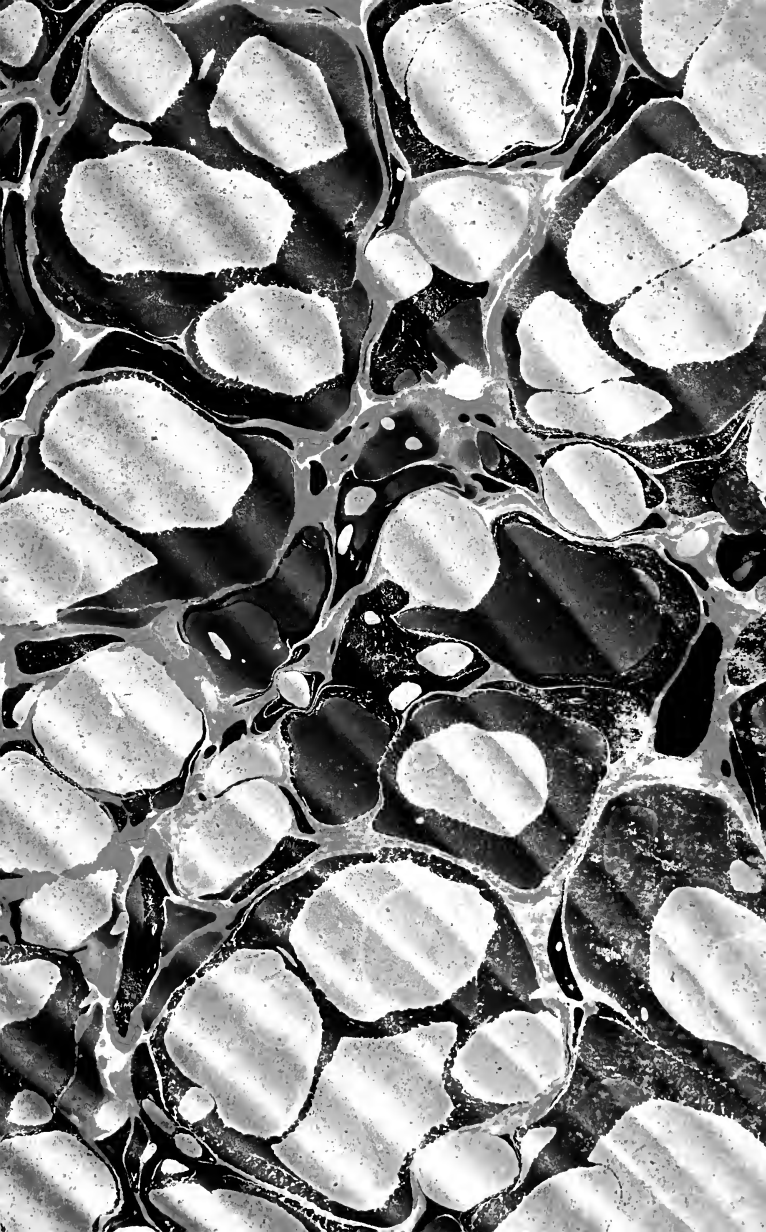


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THE
YOUNG DOCTOR.

A Nobel

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“LADY GRANARD’S NIECES,” “SIR ARTHUR
BOUVERIE,” &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE YOUNG DOCTOR.

CHAPTER I.

Strength is born
In the deep silence of long suffering hearts,
Not amidst joy !

Mrs. Hemans.

THERE are often periods in the lives of many people, the minute records of which would prove dull and uninteresting to the general reader if detailed, and therefore it is only needful that their leading events should be summed up for his apprehension. The reader then of this tale will certainly be relieved from perusing many a dull page if the several histories of the parties concerned in it, are suffered to be thus briefly noticed

till the chains of their every-day occurrences again become broken by incidents rather inclining to the domains of fiction. Of fiction, did I say? but ruin, failure, and misery are common-place occurrences, it is the onward course of true prosperity which is the fiction of real life, and therefore the vicissitudes of the Fielding family, the poverty and privations they had to endure about a year after the events related in the last volume, were, after all, not more singular than the striking alterations that often take place in our friends' circumstances, and which we scarcely notice with an exclamation of surprise.

Yet they are grievous to the actual sufferers; keenly did the Fieldings feel their change of fortune, brought on as it had been by the unwise speculations of Mr. Fielding, who, against the advice of many a true friend, had established a colliery on some estate of his in Wales, and had squandered away the greater part of his property in so doing. When this project was first

set on foot, people wondered how so cautious a man as he should embark in so hazardous a speculation; but many cautious men are rash enough at times in executing projects which they themselves have formed, and thus it was with Mr. Fielding. One person alone seemed to think that he could not be deceived as to the ultimate success of the undertaking, and from various representations on his part, sunk a considerable portion of his own property in the same project, and this was Mr. Winkelmann. The little man, perhaps, wanted some occupation to employ his time and his thoughts, as he had given up his profession, and had retired to a pretty small estate that he possessed in Berkshire.

But the colliery proved as unsuccessful as the most dismal prophets expected it would; Mr. Fielding soon found that he could not benefit by the undertaking, unless a great capital were lavished upon it, for though the mineral was certainly on the land in large quantities, it could not be

efficiently worked for a considerable period beyond that in which he had calculated upon its reimbursing the trouble and expense, both he and his friend, Mr. Winkelmann, had hitherto willingly endured. Large sums were necessary to continue the works, and these Mr. Fielding borrowed, till, as years flew by, he at length found his friend and himself irretrievably in debt, and still without the undertaking affording them the slightest prospect of profitable success.

Mr. Fielding then at once put an end to his projects, and his hopes, for although a near he was still an upright man in money matters. He sold off all his landed property, paid his debts, and subsequently found himself dowered but with a very small pittance as the remainder, while Mr. Winkelmann's income was also reduced to the same scanty measure.

In consequence of these changes of fortune, the Fieldings were obliged to alter their pleasant mode of living, to give up

their pretty west-end villa, and to return to their old quarters at Lincoln's Inn. None of them murmured at these privations, though they all deeply felt them, and no one more than Mr. Fielding himself, who, though he did not care much for the discomforts to which his rash speculations had reduced his wife and children, still became irritated and grieved when he thought of the censure and sneers his worldly wise friends would bestow on his past conduct. Every hardship, every slight that he imagined his altered circumstances thrust upon him was doubly felt. Ever an ailing man too from his youth upward, the irascibility of his temper soon preyed upon his body, and gradually he pined away, till at last the grave closed over him, about a year and a half after the events recorded in our last volume. Some said he died of a broken heart—perhaps he did; but his heart received its death blow from the failure of his ambitious projects, and not from the thoughts of the misery and grief he had

brought upon his wife and children. Yet did his family believe their misfortunes caused something of his grief; and well was it for them they thought so; for nothing is more painful to the possessor than that clear sight which instantly perceives the selfishness, worthlessness, or indifference of the object it fixes itself upon, if that object is viewed with any sort of affection. There seem thousands of tears, smiles, words and actions of kindness, of strong and pure affection, of unselfish grief to the half blind in this world; but count them up in their realities of being, and you will have but few.

Mr. Fielding left but a poor circle of clients to his son. Of late years he had much neglected the business of his profession to attend to his colliery projects, and gradually his clients had fallen off, and the offices of Fielding and Son were rarely frequented, but by a few old friends. Yet if Mr. Fielding, through inattention to his business, deserved the punishment he met with, his son did not. As earnest as his

father was neglectful of the interests of his profession, Harry Fielding strove hard to suffice for both; but it did not do; clever as young men may be, they seldom inspire confidence in the minds of grey-headed suitors, particularly if they strive to combat some idle crotchet the latter cherish; and therefore many persons when they saw the interests of the firm left to the sole care of Harry, did not approve of the careless arrangement of affairs, and forthwith withdrew their cases to place them in other hands.

Moreover Harry's appearance sadly militated against his interests. No one, when first gazing at him, would have given him credit for midnight study, or in fact any attention to the weighty concerns of the law, for he still preserved his fresh and fair complexion, good humoured smile, and somewhat apathetic manner till thoroughly roused into a difficult discussion.

"Sir," said an old country gentleman, rather indignantly to a friend, as they walked out from Mr. Fielding's offices during that

gentleman's life-time, "Sir, never tell me of that young man's sense. Do you think—does his complexion, or his air betoken study? do you think he ever pored over Blackstone or Coke? He looks as raw a youth as my own son, who born and bred in the country, has never troubled his brains with more knowledge than was caned into him at school. His sense is parrot talk, take my word for it."

"Master Harry," said an old clerk of his father's, who had known him from a child, and still gave him his infantine appellation, "Master Harry," said he, on that same day, as he opened the door of his office, "will you give me leave to speak a bit of my mind for your own good?"

"Decidedly, Jenkins," answered he, looking up from the table where he was writing, "but make haste, for I am in a hurry to be off to the Hall."

"Well, sir," returned Jenkins, solemnly, "what do you think that old gentleman was looking at when I happened to step into this room with the probate, sir?"

"I do not know," replied Harry.

"Why, at your head."

"My head? a phrenological client, eh, Jenkins?" laughed Harry.

"Shouldn't say so, sir," rejoined the old clerk, "no—he was looking at the wave of hair that passes over your forehead, and which I very well recollect Miss Frances told you to wear in that way, last Christmas. Ladies, sir, may admire a dandyish outside, but gentlemen don't, and that old gentleman didn't. He was thinking—I beg your pardon, sir, for saying so,—he was thinking whether you thought most of the arrangement of your hair or of the law; and then, when you pulled out that painted pocket handkerchief of yours, and whisked about a smell of roses, he looked very much troubled; indeed, I don't think we shall have him here again, for all that sort of thing does a great deal of harm, dear Master Harry."

"All what sort of thing?" said Harry, laughing.

"All, sir, that making yourself so completely like an idle gentleman. Sir, we never have new carpet, in an office like this, because we wish everything it contains to look as old as the business itself—which, thank Heaven! has been established these many years; therefore, to see you dressed as if for a walk in the parks, sir, doesn't do at all, particularly as your father is now always in Wales, and people imagine you have the whole direction of affairs."

"Thanks for your lecture, Jenkins," said Harry, laughing outright, "you mean to say I don't look as mouldy as the furniture in this room, but that I ought to appear so. Well, I will dress with Quaker-like simplicity for the future, and neither a painted pocket-handkerchief," said he, as he drew one from his pocket on which Frances had embroidered his initials in red cotton, "nor *parfum à la violette* shall again unsettle my clients' ideas of my sagacity."

And Harry abided by his promise with

the old clerk, and forswore all foppishness during his daily seclusion in Lincoln's Inn. He cut his yellow hair short, wore a less stylish coat ; but, alas ! for that fair complexion of his, he could not turn it sallow ! and still people were apt to take a prejudice against him because his clear skin did not in any way resemble the dusty parchments they submitted to his inspection.

Sad prospects then opened for Harry after his father's death ; one by one his clients fell off, no others came ; but still for the sake of his mother and sister, whom he chiefly supported, he toiled harder and harder, and though he had few cases to occupy his attention, diligently attended the Courts of law. He knew the world studies appearances, therefore he studied them too ; never for a moment appeared idle ; and employed all his leisure hours in extending his knowledge of his profession in the hope that the time would come when the patience with which he now bore his hard lot would not go unrewarded.

And so he worked on ; but yet his resources grew slenderer and slenderer, since it is an almost impossible thing for persons accustomed to affluence instantly to become strict economists upon a sudden change for the worse in their circumstances. Very slight indulgences tell terribly on small means, yet are never thought of as tending to heighten the daily expenditure, till their aggregate is counted up, and made to bear upon the total income. This was the case with the Fieldings ; Mrs. Fielding almost always suffered from a rheumatic complaint which though not dangerous often confined her for weeks to her room, and in consequence, she was obliged to have many indulgences that gradually made a great deficit in their yearly income. Soon, too, their circumstances grew worse and worse ; some unpaid debts, upon their father's estate came in during the second year after his death, and heavily disturbed their minds because these claims upon it were immediate. Harry borrowed money, and paid a few of them ; but even after that there

still remained a large sum owing to a hard creditor whose repeated demands for it, subjected them to great mental disquietude as they saw no possible method of clearing it as yet. Wearily enough then, and without much hope for the future, did the Fieldings try to wend their way through this world; secretly they toiled on with a heavy load at heart, which they confided to no one—no, not even to Mr. Winkelmann, since their delicacy forbade their asking any assistance from the man who had been ruined by his confidence in their father's representations respecting the L— works in Wales.

On a dark winter's day towards the end of February, about three years after Lord Ravenshill's departure for the Continent Frances Fielding idly loitered about her dull drawing-room in Lincoln's Inn. It was dusk, and she had rung earlier than usual for tea, so that her mother, who was confined to her room by one of her rheumatic attacks, might immediately have the refreshment she had just been asking for

And the hissing urn was soon brought upstairs, the cheerful beverage made, and Frances again sat down by the yet unlighted candles to muse a little on past times, to try to hope for the future. She still loved Lord Ravenshill, though it was a long time since she had parted or heard from him; for Mrs. Fielding was resolute in not permitting her daughter to correspond with his Lordship, as she hoped by interdicting that indulgence to make the love on both sides wither away, and thus enable them contentedly to seek a more fitting partner in their respective stations in life. Yet if Frances agreed to her mother's wishes in not receiving letters from Lord Ravenshill, she did not agree in her idea of the possibility of their mutually forgetting each other; she knew that could not be, and still she felt herself as firmly plighted to him as heretofore. She had parted with him when a young girl, a smiling, gentle beauty, whose waxen brow had then been scarcely touched by a line of sorrow, whose heart though it felt deeply in the hour of their separation

had still retained sanguine hopes of happiness in some future time; she mused upon him now half hopelessly, for the lapse of years had tried and shaken her faith in this world's wealth of bliss, and though her countenance yet retained the same sweet look it ever wore, there was in that look a trace of patient sadness, that, smile as she would, unchangingly dwelt there. Over her whole figure too an air of chastened repose seemed thrown, singularly different from the quick vivacity which had formerly characterized her movements; for her feelings had changed, the girl had passed into the woman, and her love was stronger though more reserved in its expression.

In the sickness of hope deferred, she tried to wait in patience for better times; and if narrowly observed, this inward patience, which Frances exercised over her feelings, exhibited itself in her outward actions; not many things could rouse her to displeasure; rarely did a frown or a word of impatience escape her, and so quietly did she take the various little an-

noyances of life, that some persons gave her credit for very little sensibility—people generally deem those apathetic who cannot cry at a trifle, or frown at a mistake.

But little did Frances care for others' opinion of her in that respect, and consequently she never thought it necessary to evince her sensibility by venting her anger in a torrent of words, or a fit of hysterics at a slight or an ill-natured action done to herself; some persons have the bluntness of feeling not to be so very susceptible on these points—a most heinous fault by the bye in the eyes of others. Nevertheless, in the rough and smooth of this world's life, exquisitely susceptible people are remarkable nuisances, and no small mischief-makers. Again, Frances could not make the unutterable sadness of her heart visible in a series of maudlin complaints, for she disliked common-place sympathy—very few sensible people really love it—and she felt she could smile, though she was unhappy, in fact, hers was a countenance which always smiled—her pretty lips naturally

curving themselves into that expression whenever she spoke. But then she certainly did not try to look ^ssorrowful, or wish to be a very fountain of tears at the mention of her absent lover's name, or her present misfortunes, as many young ladies would have been edified at seeing her, and so at three and twenty, though disappointed in love, she was still beautiful—could even be agreeable in society, and her long, flaxen ringlets never drooped round her angelic countenance with that sort of damp, melancholy twist, very becoming, no doubt, in the well executed pictures of the lovely penitents of the Romish Church ; but not so much so in a ball-room belle of the nineteenth century. Neither did her eyes, in company, assume that soft, beseeching look which some would be heroines use to attract the sympathy of their friends No ; in society, though she now very scarcely went out, Frances Fielding appeared always well dressed, and her smile was ever sweet, if it was not always brilliant. Strange to say, when people tried to render their com-

pany pleasant to her, she thought it was her duty to make hers so to them, and she generally contrived to do this; notwithstanding, that some of her acquaintance, who knew of her whispered attachment to Lord Ravenshill, averred from thence, when her attention happened to be directed towards a gentleman, that she was a most decided flirt. A flirt, indeed!—gentle Frances Fielding a flirt! people are very undetermined, now-a-days, in pointing out the genuine characteristics of a flirt, and it would certainly advance the comforts of society, if a special committee were drawn up to enquire into the matter, to point out the actual limits of flirtation, so that the stigma of the appellation flirt might not rest upon every pretty girl who chances to make herself generally agreeable.

A girl who desires to please from the mere motive of making a dull hour pass agreeably away—who receives and gives pleasure in conversation without any thought of conquest, is not a flirt; nor yet the woman, who talks to be equally admired by ladies as well as by gentlemen;

but she, who renders herself agreeable with the intention of making the gentleman, she addresses, individually, like her; accepts his professions of admiration, whether genuine or otherwise, and regularly, for vanity's sake, encourages his attendance upon her, is decidedly one; while the woman who knows a man loves her, and who skilfully plays with his passion to pacify her thirst of admiration, is not a flirt, but a coquette—which is a title far above that of a flirt in its significance, gentle reader, as much above it as that of Arch-fiend is above a satellite.

Evidently, then, Frances Fielding was not a flirt—she was only an agreeable girl; and therefore, not to be blamed for rendering her society pleasant to others, since all girls are bound to make themselves agreeable, if they can do so. And she lived tranquilly on in her unhappiness—she acted rightly—she even took care of appearances—which some excellent people are over careless about—and when she had done all she could do, she patiently bore

whatever epithets her kind friends were pleased to bestow upon her.

Quietly for awhile, on the evening at present alluded to, Frances Fielding sat by the blazing fireside in her little drawing-room at Lincoln's Inn, thinking on the absent one whom she loved so dearly, with that deep yet silent pain at heart—that sinking of the spirit, which, struggle how we may, will sometimes conquer our self-command, when the sorrow we grieve over has been a long and enduring one—yet, after a time, she strove to surmount the sense of misery she felt, for she knew that Harry would soon come up stairs to tea, and as she always endeavoured to appear contented before him, lest the thought of her unhappiness should be added to his anxiety upon other subjects, she cheerfully rose to busy herself with the tea equipage; and hardly had she approached the table before her brother, accompanied by Mr. Winkelmann, entered the room.

“What! have you no lights yet?” said Harry, “Why the room looks as dull as it

well can look, Fan. Tea ? yes, give me a cup of tea—my brains are pretty nearly worn out with hard work of late.”

“Tea,” echoed Mr. Winkelmann, “give me a cup too. I have just seen your mother, Fan, and she will be well in two or three days. Little one, I am come to say goodbye to you.”

“Indeed, my dear, sir,” exclaimed Frances, starting up from her chair with an expression of surprise, “what so soon? I thought you did not intend to go till Saturday.”

“Aye, but I do though; I have changed my mind, my dear. I have worked hard enough for many years, and now I am going to take my pleasure, to make the most of the fag end of life.”

“Well, indeed, god-papa, I wish you a pleasant tour, but I am very sorry you are going away.”

“Sorry! you little hypocritical puss! you don’t care a straw for me, you know you don’t,” laughed the old man.

“Do I not, my dear sir,” rejoined Frances,

with a sigh, and a smile, as she thought of all the old man's kindness towards herself, and towards Lord Ravenshill; "Ah! you know I do."

"Little one," returned Mr. Winkelmann, more seriously, and after a full minute's pause; "little one, if I meet Sid on the Continent, what shall I say to him?"

Frances coloured deeply, and answered, "What you like, my dear sir."

"There, Harry, my good fellow—take up that cup of tea to your mother," said Mr. Winkelmann, pointing to one on the table with his gold-headed cane, "she has been enquiring for you. She is rather anxious I fancy, about your sore-throat."

And Harry, who easily perceived that his old friend was going to open a conversation with his sister, which he did not wish him to hear, obediently did as he desired him.

"Now, Fan, child," said Mr. Winkelmann, as soon as Harry left the room, "tell me how matters stand with you and Horace. I am not curious; but I really wish to know all I can about this case, since you have

both some claims upon my kindness. Has he heard of your father's death, and your present disasters?"

"Not from me," replied Frances, colouring more and more. "I do not write to him."

"From Harry, then?"

"No, I believe not—Harry does not often answer the letters he sometimes addresses to him."

"Then he knows nothing about your misfortunes" rejoined Mr. Winkelmann, "since I have not told him of them, as I did not wish to distress him by speaking of my loss, or yours. I do not like to mention pecuniary business, because of that little affair which occurred between his father and me. Nevertheless, I imagine yours ought to be communicated to him, or else all hopes—all ties between you, must be necessarily done away with, Fan. I think the last will be the wisest course to pursue, after all. You have now been engaged—no, not engaged, your good mama will not allow that to be the case, though it clearly

is so, since neither of you intend to marry elsewhere ; well, then you have been waiting for each other, I say, these four years, and as far as I can see, without the slightest prospect of ultimately coming together. Do you mean to wait thirty long twelve-months for the consent of your lover's parents, as a cousin of mine did, and then marry, perhaps, in your fiftieth year? A pleasant prospect that, Fan ; you and Sid must give up all hopes of each other, unless you marry without the approbation of the Marquis."

" And that I will not do," quietly answered Frances, " that would bring mischief upon Horace—entirely estrange him from his family !"

" Not more than he is at present," answered Mr. Winkelmann, with a sharp sneer on his usually benevolent countenance ; " but remember, Fan, I don't recommend a runaway match, or wish Sid to disobey the Marquis. I only mean to observe that, as matters now stand, it is a folly to nourish hopes on either side. I speak unkindly, do

I, Fan? Well—well, it is an unkindness well meant, I assure you. I don't want to see you waste your life away in a mere dream, which will never come to pass. You will not marry without Lord Chillingworth's consent, you say, although Sid, knowing your perfect ignorance of the embarrassing circumstances in which he stood at the time of your making this engagement with him, nevertheless, offers to fulfil it. Well, you act wisely in not suffering him to do so; but then, let me tell you; you would act with still greater wisdom if you altogether broke it off. What awaits you but long loving years of hope deferred? Fan, my dear, cast away all thoughts of keeping this engagement, and I'll undertake that Sid shall think the best of it."

Frances rose suddenly from her chair, and her cheek crimsoned, and her eyes brightened.

"No," she said; "I will not break faith with him, godpapa—how can you, who love him, urge me to do so? I told him he

was free," she added, falteringly, "he is so now; therefore, if he can find happiness elsewhere, he may; but I—"

"Cannot," said Mr. Winkelmann, curtly, "No, Fan, there is no likelihood of your doing so, while the slightest hope of being united to him remains—so cut the knot at once, and think no more about him. Little darling, 'tis not for the sake of Sidney's present title, or riches, that you are so pertinacious in maintaining your affection for him, that I know." And for a moment the little man looked keenly into her face.

"That you know," repeated Frances, quietly, "for oh! I wish he were but Sidney Beckford."

"So do I, most heartily—most heartily," said Mr. Winkelmann, walking backwards and forwards before the fire-place, "and then both I and my little girl should be happy—should we not?"

"Yes," answered Frances, and large tears trickled down over her cheeks, and she added a moment afterwards, "he must often think of you, godpapa."

Mr. Winkelmann understood her meaning, and approached her with something like a tear in his eye.

“Aye—aye, Fan, I dare say he does, for I loved him as my own son, which is more than Lord Chillingworth can say for himself. There is a good deal of barbarity in that man’s disposition, and about twice as much again in his wife’s. But,” he added a moment afterwards, “poor woman! she has already had her punishment, since that younger son of hers has become such an invalid—just too as he had begun to gain the confidence of a few respectable people. He has entirely given up his parliamentary duties, and gone to Lisbon, so I hear. Fan, perhaps the deep affliction she is now suffering will teach her to think more kindly of Sid.”

He paused for a moment, and then said, as he looked at his watch,

“It is near eight, and I must be on London Bridge by ten—it will soon be time to say good-bye. Is your determination

the same as ever respecting Sid? for, depend upon it, I will make an effort to see him."

"Yes," replied Frances; "tell him I am not changed; but," she added a moment afterwards, "say also that I do not wish him to consider himself as bound to me."

"Not in words," answered Mr. Winkelmann, with a smile, "only in the faith of the soul—eh, Fan? That is but a sorry distinction, little one."

"As you will, godpapa," returned Frances, as her brother re-entered the room "Yet even mama has consented to our waiting for each other some time longer, if we do not actually bind ourselves to do so."

"Yes, she consents to that measure with the latent hope of your changing your mind in the long run, and of your wedding, the indefatigable and never to be repulsed Harvey."

Frances seemed to shrink back from Mr. Winkelmann's side at the mention of this gentleman's name; but she said not a word

in reply, and he turned to her brother Harry.

“You are just in time to bid me good-bye. I am going,” said he; “What! you will accompany me to London Bridge?—well—well, make haste then. Fan, my dear, help me on with my great coat, Mary has wisely brought it from below. So, you are a good little girl—tell your mother, by the bye, to mind my directions, and not those of that quack Ogilvie. Good-bye! you won’t see me again for five or six months—good-bye!”

And, accompanied by Harry, Mr. Winkelmann left Lincoln’s Inn, and Frances went up stairs to watch by the sick-bed of her mother.

CHAPTER II.

It is the most soul besetting sin of woman to be perpetually investing earthly objects with an interest too intense for her own happiness.

MRS. ELLIS.

“FRANCES,” said Harry Fielding one day to his sister, as he entered their dusty-looking drawing-room, and found her there alone about a month after Mr. Winkelmann’s departure, “Frances, now my mother is just gone out, it is as well to inform you that I do not expect we shall get over the last terrible piece of business I told you of. L—’s failure has undone us, and our little property is nearly all lost—we shall not receive above five shillings in the pound.”

Frances did not answer for a moment or two, then she said, in a tremulous voice, and with pallid cheeks—

“What will become of us, Harry?”

Harry Fielding bent down over the table

he was at that moment leaning upon, and tried to speak calmly ; but he did not very well succeed in the endeavour, when he replied—

“ This house must be relinquished, Fan, it was deeply mortgaged by my father to Rees Davies—and it must be sold to pay him his amount, since he will not wait any longer. I cannot even retain the lower floor for offices—I have not a farthing of money to do so.”

“ Harry,” rejoined Frances, in an agitated voice, “ what a prospect of misery we seem to face ! where can you find offices at a cheaper rent than these to continue the business of your profession ?”

“ I did not say I could continue it,” replied her brother, gloomily, “ I must try for some other employment—a clerkship, perhaps.”

“ A clerkship !” repeated Frances, looking aghast at the idea, “ a clerkship ! after having toiled as you have done to gain some standing in the law ! What will your poor mama say ? what shall we do ?”

“I will tell you what you must do, Fan,” answered Harry, “you must take cheap lodgings for my mother and yourself in one of the suburbs, and then you can try to give a few lessons in the morning governess way while I work at some employment in town. God knows when this run of ill-luck will cease, Fan, I have thought of all this, till my heart is ready to break; but I can devise no better plans.”

Frances was utterly silent for some minutes.

“Harry,” at length she said, “it is utter ruin to abandon the slightest chances of gaining a livelihood by your profession. Even if we sell this house—pay Mr. Davies the money, and if nothing remains, cannot you get some friend to lend you a sufficient sum to rent these offices for a year or two longer, to see whether there is any possibility of your prospects changing for the better? and meanwhile I and mama will live cheaply at Islington or Hampstead, or somewhere else?”

Harry smiled sadly enough.

“What friend have we,” he said, “who could lend us the means to do this? Mr. Winkelmann is the only one we have, and of him we cannot ask assistance since he is already impoverished by his participation in our father’s hasty schemes. I know of no other real friend.”

There was another silence between the brother and sister—a despairing one it seemed, and then Frances Fielding, blushing deeply, spoke again—

“But I do, Harry,” said she, with considerable hesitation, “we have another who I am sure will readily help us, if we inform him of our present embarrassments. I,” she added, her colour meanwhile rising more and more, and her eyes seeking her brother’s with a painful look of enquiry, “I for one shall not feel humbled in doing so, though you may?”

“Whom do you mean?” asked Harry.

“Horace!” answered Frances, half inaudibly.

Harry started.

“No, Frances,” he said, “I would

sooner die—aye, in jail—before I would ask Sidney for help. What! now—when the demand would seem but a plan to win his compassion for you? Severed as he is from us by his father's will, he is the last person in this world of whom I would request succour."

"And," answered Frances, with a tone and look of indignation, "he is the first of whom I would ask it. Yes," she continued more firmly, as she met her brother's half angry glance of surprise, "yes; I do not feel ashamed in entreating assistance from one who I know will be right glad to tender it; I do not imagine that because he was once received here as a suppliant, he will now think that in doing so we claim back a debt. He knows us better than to judge us so blindly—I would only claim his succour, as the succour of the truest friend we have, and he will see matters in the same light as I do."

"I doubt that," returned her brother, hastily, "he will feel our demand but as a claim for past services rendered, he will

know our pecuniary difficulties—and, and—”

“He need not know them all,” replied Frances, “not the utmost straits to which we are reduced. Harry,” added she, more earnestly, “this is the only way to save you from utter ruin, believe me—let me then write to him; I will not in the slightest degree appeal to his compassion. I will merely ask for the loan as a matter of pressing necessity—and he will be sure to send it to us—for I have the same faith in Horace as he has in us. He will not suppose that any action which we may do, arises from paltry motives. Why should you refuse a friend, the dearest privilege of a friend? that of helping him to whom his heart is knit in kindness? Harry, since Horace willingly traces back all his obligations to Mr. Winkelmann in the first place to us, tell me is there not some pride in refusing to suffer him to express his gratitude in some long yearned for action of requital? If you had a friend, who allowed himself to sink to ruin for the want of ask-

ing a simple favour of you, because he had in past times obliged you, would you not feel deeply hurt? surely you would, and will not Sidney then when he comes to know the real state of our affairs, as he must do some day or other? Sympathy, friendship, nor succour, would I ask from persons, whose hearts I did not know; but his, Harry, which you and I have read as we have read our own, what single feeling is there in it that can make us shrink back from desiring and obtaining its aid?"

Harry Fielding glanced irresolutely up at his sister; but before he answered, she spoke again.

"You are thinking of me, Harry," said she, gently laying her hand on his shoulder, and earnestly gazing at him—"You are thinking that when Horace hears we are even slightly straitened in circumstances, I shall have to bear another painful interview with him. It may be so; but, Harry, all that can be borne—not easily, perhaps, yet resignedly. Brother, suffer me to ask for this loan of money—one or two hundred pounds will not be much for one in

his station of life to lend or lose ; and it will save us from ruin. Brother, do not think of me—think of mama ; if when I leave this place I do not instantly succeed in getting any employment that will keep us above absolute want—and I may not—actual starvation will overtake us ; whereas with a little money to go on with for a few months longer, I shall assuredly hear of something that will suit my purpose.”

And Harry remained silent, thinking of the misery and privation his invalid mother would have to undergo, if his pride taught him to shun the only means of succour within his reach.

“He is in England now—he was to return last week,” continued Frances. “Harry, I may write, may I not ?”

And as her brother still answered nothing, taking silence for assent she sat down, took up pen and paper, and quickly wrote off a few lines, which she afterwards presented for him to read.

“Yes, that will do,” said he, after he had perused them, “your note, Fan, does not speak too much of privation, it merely

asks for the loan. But," he added, a moment afterwards, "you seem to say you do not expect to see him again; you appear to hint that no further intercourse must take place between you."

"And that is what I mean to infer," replied Frances, calmly, yet with a trickling tear on her cheek, "where is the use of seeing him again, when my heart tells me all hope is well nigh lost? Shall I send this letter to the post, Harry—where is your Court Guide? I do not know the address of the Chillingworths since they have left Grosvenor Square."

She looked for the direction she required, wrote it down on a small envelope, and was about to leave the room when Harry stopped her.

"I feel great misgivings, a presentiment of evil," he said, "I will wait awhile, for should he refuse us this assistance, I should never forgive myself having asked it of him."

"Refuse! Horace refuse!" repeated Frances, half contemptuously; then she

added more seriously, "Harry, do you dislike to owe your preservation from ruin to him? Do not be so unkind; what if his family has acted strangely towards us, towards godpapa? he has not. Come, think of all our friendly days together; you would have asked assistance of him then, if he had had the means to afford it to us."

"Aye, when he was Sidney Beckford," rejoined Harry, uneasily, "because Fan, there was not a fellow that I loved or trusted half so much as Sid; but now—"

"But now, do not you love him now, Harry?" asked his sister, eagerly. "Has false pride unsettled your reason, is your friendship lessened because he happens to be higher born than we are?" And here the calm, beautiful expression of her countenance broke into a passing look of scorn. "If it is, you must have less praiseworthy feelings than those which I have hitherto given you credit for. I should think Horace and you knew each other too well to fear appearances—shall this letter go, Harry?"

“ Shall I write myself ?” said her brother.

“ No,” she replied, “ because you may again demur over the matter, if I suffer you to do so—as I have written—let my missive go.”

And hastening down stairs, she sent the letter to the post. The intervening days between the departure of the letter and its answer were spent in restless agitation by Harry and his sister; but by Mrs. Fielding in unconsciousness of the trial at issue, for her health was so precarious that her children dared not tell her all the anxieties they had continually to endure, and during many months of trouble, disasters after disasters were concealed from her in consequence of the ill effect any agitating intelligence invariably had upon her weakened frame. Their application to Lord Ravenshill as well as its primary cause, they, therefore, kept secret from her, though day after day with increasing anxiety they waited for its expected reply.

At length, after a full week's period of

suspense, the wished for answer arrived, by the evening's post, just as Frances was sitting down in the dining room to work, by the side of of her mother, who was sleeping on the sofa before the fire.

Harry himself brought up the letter from below, and Frances eagerly took it from him, and began to open it. At the first rent of the envelope a small paper parcel fell from the inside, and she allowed it to drop into her hand without taking any notice of it, while she perused the writing. Harry meanwhile stood anxiously by her side, looking eagerly towards her in expectation of guessing the truth by the expression of her countenance. Suddenly he saw her become deathly pale, and with a flush of anger he bent forward, and almost mechanically seized the letter, as if to satisfy the terrible doubts which in that moment rushed heavily to his mind. Frances looked up, when the paper on which, for the last few moments, she had been gazing, as if spell bound by its contents, was thus suddenly withdrawn from before her, and hurriedly stretched out her hand to take it

from him. "Frances," said her brother, in an altered, husky tone, as she tried to withdraw it from her grasp, "Frances, tell me, is it yes or no?"

At the sound of Harry's voice, Frances Fielding rose from her chair, glancing for one moment on her sleeping mother, and placing her finger on her lips, as she took her brother's hand, said, in a tremulous tone, "Come with me, Harry,—any where—into the next room—come with me."

And Harry imagining that she wished to communicate the contents of the letter, without disturbing Mrs. Fielding, quickly accompanied her from the apartment, to the broad landing-place it opened upon. Here Frances stopped, took a candle from a table standing there, lighted it, at the passage lamp, and opened the door of a back room, into which she turned, followed by her brother.

"Now, Frances," said Harry, as he saw her, upon her entrance, stand perfectly motionless and silent in the middle of the dimly lighted apartment, as if her powers of speech and action had been exhausted by

the exertions of the last few moments, "Now, tell me the truth at once,—he has refused it—has he not?" And Frances recalled to herself by her brother's words, set down the candle on the table near her, placed the paper she held before her, and laying a trembling hand upon the lines it contained, she looked up into his face with a strange, sickly smile, as she asked, "What does that mean, Harry?"

He looked at the page she pointed at, and saw written, in a seemingly agitated hand, the following lines, "Written words were not necessary to inform me of circumstances which must obliterate the memories of the past, and change the plans of the future. A fortnight since I heard the truth—all claims, all ties have fallen to the ground between us."

Harry Fielding read these words twice through, ere he looked up or addressed his sister. They were the only ones the letter contained, and each time his eyes conveyed their purport to his mind, a deep hectic flush passed rapidly over his features,

though it as suddenly left them whiter than the leaf he held in his hand, then crushing the paper within his grasp, he glanced for a moment at his sister, who very calmly, but silently stood by his side, "What does that mean, reiterated she, in the same low faint tone, as she met his angry look, with one of vacant enquiry. "Mean," suddenly exclaimed Harry, in a deep thick voice, "it means that he is a scoundrel, Frances—that that he has refused the paltry sum we were such fools as to ask of him—that he has annulled your mutual engagement—annulled it," laughed Harry, in the very bitterness of his heart. "He dares, does he, to break the contract which you, in your pure truthfulness would have kept till better days—he who is one of nature's exquisite mockeries of humanity, and you, you Frances, are as beautiful a girl as the sun ever shone upon. Now, by heaven! my rage nearly strangles me!"

And with his features almost convulsed by the anger that the insult levelled at his sister,

rather than the actual refusal of the money, excited in his breast, Harry drew nearer Frances, who seemed to awake from a lethargic grief to gaze at him in wonder, till, as she heard the cruel words he uttered upon Horace's deformity, the frame of the young girl seemed to shrink together, and she gasped out, "For God's sake, Harry, do not speak in that manner, —I cannot bear it."

Harry seized her hand.

"What is this, Frances," said he, as he took up the small paper packet, which had fallen from the letter, and which she had unconsciously held till then.

"Oh not—not the succour, I hope," murmured she, turning away with a look of sickening enquiry, "see, what it is Harry."

And her brother hastily opened it, and drew from thence a long ringlet of light brown hair. Harry's hand trembled like an aspen leaf, as he unfolded that tress, and guessed from whose fair head it had been severed.

“It is yours, Frances,” he uttered, in a low, hollow tone.

“It is mine,” returned she, as she took it in her hand, and held it to the light, “mine, Harry.”

And a wild gush of tears fell over the bright, silken hair.

“Do not weep, Frances,” said Harry, in hurried, angry accents; “the cold-hearted traitor, he is not worth a tear! Such as we thought him in past years, you were too good for him; aye, had he even laid wealth and titles at your feet; and now, now, such as he is, I would sooner see you wedded to yonder street beggar than to him. Do not weep! hate him, despise him; but shed no tears.”

But the tears of Frances fell faster and faster on the tress she held in her hand, till suddenly she cast it aside, looked up, and said—

“What has changed him, Harry?”

“Time—place—circumstance,” he answered, still more, sharply, “perhaps he has listened to his father’s representations,

and deems you scarcely illustrious enough for one of his birth! Perhaps he has found a richer bride, and sold his soul for the trash he has refused to lend us ; perhaps, he is snared by a woman of his own rank, who has flattered him into the belief of her love for him—and who, I hope, will wring his heart, as his mother once wrung it—reproach him with that for which you loved him, and make him die as lonely and friendless as when your childish pity first succoured him in the street.”

Frances did not answer her brother ; her brain seemed too weightily oppressed with tumultuous thoughts, to suffer her to give utterance to a single word. Once or twice she raised her hand to her head, as if to still a bursting pain there, then let it fall lifelessly by her side, and sat quiet, with her eyes half closed, and her whole figure drooping and trembling against the table near her. Harry moved closer to her, for he feared that she was ill ; but she did not appear faint, neither did she weep, and yet a strange air clung to her, which he did

not like to see. Presently she looked up, took Lord Ravenshill's letter in her hand, and again endeavoured to read it, but the tremor of her slight fingers was communicated to the paper, and effectually prevented her from doing so. Once more she laid it on the table, traced the contents word for word with her hand, and then turning to her brother, she said, quietly—

“There can be no mistake, Harry—it is written very plainly.”

“No mistake,” repeated Harry, with a bitter sneer, “though laconic, ’tis expressive enough.” Then he saw her tears falling fast over the paper, he said, in a gentler tone, “Frances, my own dear sister, you cannot weep for such a man!”

Poor Frances looked wistfully up into her brother's face.

“He was not always so, Harry,” said she, “once he was good and true.”

“True!” echoed he, with a fresh burst of angry feeling, “aye, true to his own interests—all men are so.”

“I will go up-stairs a little while,” re-

joined Frances, who saw that if she staid longer with her brother, she should only hear a torrent of reproaches against Horace, which she felt she could not calmly listen to, since it is a most painful trial to a loving heart to hear one whom it has cherished ill spoken of, however well deserving he may be of censure. "I will go up-stairs for a little while," she said, "I shall be down to tea; do not wake Mama till then, Harry. I think," she added, more slowly, as if the words cost her a severe pang to utter, "I think mama had better not know of this directly, because she is so ill, brother; she will imagine that I feel it more than I do—she must not be told of it until she gets better."

"Perhaps not," answered Harry, hastily, "for she will feel his insolence as deeply as I feel it."

And as his own countenance became again flushed with anger, he looked at the quiet features of Frances in some surprise, as she, satisfied that he would not immediately

divulge what had happened, moved towards the door. Suddenly, however, she turned back, and came again to Harry's side.

"Brother," she said, and the tears stole down her cheeks, as she looked sadly up into his face. "I have been very selfish—I have not thought of you all this while—what resource is now left to you?"

"None," replied Harry, calmly, "none but that which I at first proposed. Do not, however, distress yourself about me, Fan—no one knows what may happen yet."

"Misery enough is before us," said Frances, half inaudibly, "a long, hopeless future."

"No, no," answered Harry, with a look of pain, as he glanced at the slight and delicate frame of his beautiful sister, which, to his eyes, did not seem capable of bearing much toil or privation, and he tried to inspire her with a hope that he himself did not feel—"No, no," he said, "not a hopeless future, dear Fan; do not say so. If you give way, I surely shall, since, in old

times, you always kept up my courage when any little misfortune happened—and you must act the same part now.”

The white lips of Frances assumed a smile, as if in answer to her brother’s appeal for her support; but still her tears flowed faster and faster, as apparently unheeding his words, she said, “It is very strange, Harry, that every human being must be sooner or later deceived, where the most trust is placed.—I scarcely believed it was so, till now.”

And a slightly hysterical laugh issued from her lips, and she leant heavily upon her brother’s arm.

“Hush, hush,” said Harry, with a wish to keep down her grief, as he glanced through the half open door, towards the room in which he still perceived that Mrs. Fielding was sleeping, “Fan, my darling, you will wake mother.” She seemed to understand him, for she evidently tried to vanquish her emotion, and she said, “Harry, I shall be better soon; but my

head seems giddy—bursting. I wish I could go away.—I wish you would leave me here, by myself.—I am better now.”

And as she spoke, she raised her hand to her head, and stepping towards the open window, remained for some time leaning upon it, still in utter silence, till, as her eyes fell suddenly upon her brother, who was standing near her, she turned round, threw her arms round his neck, and wept passionately. The heavy pressure of the unexpected grief then assailing her, was too much for her to check and completely overcome. Her tears, during the space of a few minutes, flowed as if her very heart would break, while deeper and deeper at the sight grew Harry’s burning anger against Lord Ravenshill, all voiceless though it was, at that moment, for his sister’s sake.

Presently, however, Frances Fielding revived, and again turning towards the open casement, she let the keen night breeze play upon her temples, and, a few moments afterwards, passing her hand through the light brown tresses that floated round her pale

face, she assured her brother, she was quite well, and begged him to leave her by herself.

“Not all alone, in this dismal looking room,” replied Harry uneasily, for he saw she looked extremely ill, and he did not wish to leave her, “with that single candle on the table yonder ; it looks as miserable a place as ever I saw, Fan.”

“Quite cheerful enough for me,” replied Frances, with a smile, “I only wish to smooth my hair so that mamma may not notice its derangement. Go to her, Harry, and tell her I will come and make the tea directly—go, or she will wonder where we are.”

“Shall I tell her you are too tired to see her this evening ? Shall I make some excuse for you ?” asked Harry, who knew well that just then any exertion on the part of Frances to speak to, or amuse Mrs. Fielding, would be torture to a mind yet unstrung by the surprise it had received.

But she would not suffer him to do so ; she said she would return to the drawing

room in less than five minutes, and Harry, seeing that she was determined to act as she had spoken, left the room.

Not, however, in five minutes did Frances make her appearance in the drawing room ; thoughts that she could not repress thronged within her mind, and carried it away from all consideration at the promise she had given. The anchor upon which she had cast the hopes of her happiness, lay shattered at her feet by a blow as cruel as it was unexpected, and with strange, tumultuous thoughts of anguish she began to examine the wreck. Passionately for awhile did she weep and think, when left to herself ; but soon her tears cleared the way for calmer reflection, and she sat still, with a sad, patient look upon her face, as a stream of burning thoughts hurried through her brain, and roused her heart to bitter, bitter sorrow ; she sat motionless, apparently passionless ; her large violet eyes gazing out into the old dusky room, as if in its thick shadows she perceived the embodiment of her ideas, as if scenes of her early days, and

of future hours, gathered round her. And they did so gather, there amidst the dark vacancy she saw the worn, haggard boy of the streets, addressing her in the sweet yet mournful tones, which in past times had aroused her compassion ; she heard his thanks, she beheld his calm soft glances dwelling upon her in the fondness of gratitude.—Scene after scene passed on—slowly whispered words of love, and vows of life-long constancy were poured into her listening ear,—her lover's well known tones seemed telling her that she was the only one who had ever loved him, that the future, dark as it always had been, till her affection taught him happiness, was now bright with hope, and then, even as she appeared to be gazing on his face, bent as it seemed towards her, the harsh outlines of its features assumed a harsher form, a mocking, hateful smile sat upon them, though the eyes seemed to shine yet patiently and sweetly, like still stars glittering midst a frowning sky. And Frances started at the sudden change her troubled

mind had wrought upon the picture of her own fancy, and rising from the window-sill, on which she was leaning, she looked far into the depths of shadow before her. The moon shed a sickly lustre through the room that, struggling with the dim light of the distant candle, made its faint outlines alone visible, and no vision, even to her, appeared stretched upon its darkness.

“He has changed,” she murmured, a moment afterwards, “changed even as that strange shadowy likeness did erewhile—the vows he uttered are all vanished, the gratitude he expressed is lifeless. And for what has he left me? for gold, beauty? whom does he love, who can love him as I do? Did he not seem to live in the light of my smile, to hope but in my presence? Have I not seen his tears flow, and read the deeper feelings of his heart, which no eye but mine and Heaven’s has read? And now, now he sends back my demand for succour unanswered, and at the same time presses a barbed arrow into my heart. Cruel must the rest of the world be—I deemed him

amongst the best!" She paused for a moment, then wept more bitterly, as the current of thought swept on, and taught her to despise the idol she had once cherished. "He is not worthy of a woman's love," she murmured, "if he could thus cruelly insult it. Worshipped as he was he shall lie low where he once was mighty—to the ungenerous, to the faithless my heart shall not bend—and yet, and yet, to know that the good has fallen, to find pure trust deceived, is, to bear, most bitter, bitter anguish! Must I live on, and know him worthless? Him in whom I once thought I could place my faith unshaken? Oh! I would that I had lost him by some other way than this!"

And then she thought of her future life embittered as it would be by poverty, and love repulsed. Toil and sorrow were before her with no hope to gild their ultimate end, and her heart for the moment sank within her, in utter despair. But soon her mind dwelt upon her mother whose very life seemed to depend upon her care—upon her brother whose only friend she was, and

brighter, calmer thoughts came to her soul.

“Their love,” she said, “and the smile of gratitude, the relief of the weary may yet be mine.”

And as her heart clung to the belief in their affection, she felt there were thousands of her fellow-creatures more grief-stricken than she was, and she became ashamed of her despairing sorrow, she deemed it would be but selfishness to abandon herself to it unrestrainedly, to let the mind, with its excellent energies, the heart with its exquisite feelings, remain blunted by the blow they had received ; and she glanced again upon that onward view of her future life from which she had hitherto sickened. Reason told her, that although at the approach of grief the soul may, for awhile, remain prostrate in its embrace ; still, when its first deadly pangs are past, it should strive to regain its strength, and remain supreme over such utter weakness. Selfish sorrow she knew ought not to rise paramount over duty ; or our spirits to cower down because grief-stricken ; for when a

soul after years of lax endeavour or idle misery at last looks into itself, follows with its reason the aim of each of its faculties, and knows that its past listlessness was guilt, every moment in which it suffered its powers to decay, will bind down conscience to a lasting remorse. A soul, like an instrument of music, should be well tuned to meet the various strains, the hand of Destiny may call from its thrilling chords; firmly yet sweetly should its notes ring out, of whatever character they are; strong but sweet music still should a God-strengthened spirit yield beneath the touch of sorrow or adversity, as sweet, though it may be sadder, as in its days of brightest power.

Gently and truly was the soul of Frances Fielding tuned; its chords had indeed at first thrilled discordantly beneath the rude touch of sorrow; but gradually the echo of those jarring sounds passed away, and it hymned a holier strain—a strain of womanly resignation, and if in after times there were moments during which grief

struggled for the mastery in her heart, her spirit yet possessed sufficient firmness to restrain it from its triumph, and thus although upon her brow there sat a shade of sorrow, the smile of patience and of love remained there still.

CHAPTER III.

Wither heart, but wither meekly,—
Let not bitterness invade
Feeling's sad and secret shelter,
Though thy brightest hopes must fade.

As a ruin cloth'd with flowers
Hurries on to sure decay,
Still supporting wreaths of beauty,
Pass thou from the earth away !

Like a crush'd rose yield thy sweetness—
While death revels in its frame
Still it spreads its choicest perfumes—
Wither'd heart ! do thou the same !

“ We are quiet people, ma'am, very quiet,” said Mrs. Gray, the mistress of the lodgings at Hackney, which Mrs. Fielding and her daughter had taken upon their

leaving Lincoln's Inn, as Harry had proposed before and after the receipt of Lord Ravenshill's letter. "Very quiet," continued she, as she brought in the homely supper tray, on the night they first arrived there, "we have only one lodger besides yourself and Miss Fielding, a Mrs. Stevenson, a very nice sort of lady—a young widow."

Mrs Fielding perceived that Mrs. Gray was inclined to talk to her for some length of time; but as she felt exceedingly fatigued by their removal from her old home, she endeavoured to dismiss her from her presence as quickly, but as civilly as she could, and only answered her by a short observation.

"Yes, ma'am," returned Mrs. Gray, "I thought that would recommend the apartments to a sick lady. I hope you will find everything quite comfortable here to-night."

And Mrs. Gray seeing that her desire to re-commence a conversation on that evening

was not likely to be encouraged, left her lodgers to themselves.

It was about nine o'clock at night when Mrs. Fielding and her daughter entered the poor apartments they were thenceforth to consider as their home, and weary as they both felt, they were very glad to retire to rest as soon as possible, without casting even the slightest glance of curiosity around them. But the next morning when Frances rose to make the breakfast, it was with a saddened look that she passed her eyes over the comfortless sitting-room. Its two large windows opened upon a small dull street, out of which branched three dingy counterparts of itself, while not the slightest trace of cheerfulness within the apartment atoned for the want of attractiveness without, for gaudy chintz furniture filled up its dimensions of twelve feet square, and its walls were decorated with a showy paper, and a few staring ornaments that looked as tawdry and as vulgar as the lodging-house mistress herself. The old house in Lincoln's Inn, surrounded as it was

with dusty courts and buildings had appeared dull enough to Frances upon her leaving the pretty Brompton villa, but now, in comparison to her present home, it seemed a very palace; and with a heavy heart, yet with a smiling face she waited her mother's arrival at the breakfast table, for she feared she would feel as grieved at the sight of the effects of their poverty, as she did. Yet if Mrs. Fielding felt the change in their altered circumstances, she was at least wise enough to put on the same appearance of cheerfulness as her daughter had assumed, and the morning meal was partaken of by both ladies without a word of complaint being uttered by either.

Two or three weeks passed, and the mother and daughter, though sad at heart, began to be more reconciled to their new home, from the fact that by their having distributed a few old nick-nacks of their own about the rooms, they had succeeded in making them assume a greater appearance of comfort than they had at first exhibited.

But still time flew on very cheerlessly ; their old London friends fell off ; they acquired no new ones in their present neighbourhood ; indeed, they did not wish to acquire any, because their circumstances not permitting them to return the visits of their equals in rank and education on the same terms of equality as they had hitherto done, they felt it inconvenient to make their acquaintance, and Harry, who for the sake of being early at the business of the clerkship he now possessed, lodged in town, was at last the only person whose visits broke through their monotonous way of living. Calmly, however, did the mother and daughter consider the plan of their future life, the rank they should henceforth hold in the world, and what other resources they possessed besides their scanty income ; and at length after some deliberation it was resolved that Frances should undertake to give a few daily lessons to the children of the most respectable families in the neighbourhood, while Mrs. Fielding determined,

though much against her daughter's will, to take in plain work.

Generally, therefore, thus occupied, their days passed, till the twilight closed in, and then Frances, who was obliged to remain abroad all the morning, came home, made Mrs. Fielding put by her work, and in the dusk, began a quiet conversation upon the current news, or listened with her to the soft strains of vocal and instrumental music which they invariably heard at that hour in the apartment overhead, where they knew their fellow lodger Mrs. Stevenson resided. This lady always played for more than two hours of an evening, and as she was a brilliant and excellent musician, she was perfectly capable of delighting her hearers. She seemed too, of an amiable disposition, for once or twice when she had perhaps understood from Mrs. Gray that Mrs. Fielding was indisposed, she sent down to ask whether she disturbed her in thus playing ; but the latter lady who was passionately fond of music, replied that she

did not, and so the soft and brilliant serenades from above, were continued day after day.

Mrs. Fielding and her daughter very much wished to speak to the gentle musician who had acted so considerately towards them ; but they could find no opportunity of doing this, although in the passage or on the stairs they met her many and many a time, and saw that she was extremely beautiful and ladylike. At length, however, they were gratified by the actual fulfilment of their wish, and in this way.

One morning when Frances was employed in giving her daily lessons, and her mother was sitting alone in the little parlour, a large black cat, followed by a small spaniel, jumped through the half open door, and entered the room. Mrs. Fielding looked up at the uncereemonious intruders, and as she saw they did not seem very amicably disposed towards one another, she was about to dismiss them, as quickly as she could, when the mistress of the house suddenly appeared upon the scene of contention, and

expressed her sorrow, that she should have been disturbed by them, adding by way of explanation, that the dog had escaped from her care to which it had been consigned by Mrs. Stevenson, who was then spending the day in town.

“But,” said she, in a rather pettish tone, “one cannot look all day after so troublesome an animal as that—though, to be sure, I would do many things to please Mrs. Stevenson.”

“Then leave him with me,” rejoined Mrs. Fielding, “and I will take care of him—only take the cat away.”

And to this proposition the woman gladly acceded, and the dog remained with Mrs. Fielding for the rest of the day.

Three or four hours passed; then twilight came on, and Frances returned home, and sat down to tea with her mother. Ten minutes after she had done so, a gentle knock was heard at the door of their apartment, and Mrs. Stevenson entered to thank Mrs. Fielding for her good-natured surveillance of the dog.

She was dressed as usual in deep widow's mourning ; but the air of calm repose which Mrs. Fielding and her daughter, in their accidental meetings with her at home and abroad, had hitherto noticed, as her peculiar characteristic, seemed to have entirely vanished, and it was with considerable embarrassment that she proffered them her first greeting. Gradually, however, she recovered her self-possession, and her pale countenance reassumed its sad quietude of expression : readily and winningly she conversed with them for some time, and by degrees her lady-like and attractive manners almost forced them to feel as intimate with her as with an old friend. While thus conversing with the fair stranger, both the mother and daughter could not help being struck by the great traces of beauty, they discerned upon her faded features, notwithstanding their extreme pallor, and the sharp hollowness of their outlines. The bloom of youth in her case had been evidently blighted by early sorrow, for deep, dark lines of grief were traced upon

her broad fair brow, and she looked care-worn and ill: they felt she was so, and feeling this, with true kindness they wished to tender her their friendship, for they had long since learnt from Mrs. Gray that she was as poverty-stricken in that commodity as themselves. Sympathy they knew though given by one unfortunate to another was sympathy still, and earnestly they desired to cultivate their visitor's acquaintance; for in her they did not dread superior rank, or superior wealth—neither did they fear the contrary, since from her quiet, well-bred manners, they instinctively felt that like themselves she had seen better days. And thus, when she rose to bid them the good-evening, Frances and Mrs. Fielding begged that they might soon have the pleasure of seeing her again. With a crimson blush, Mrs. Stevenson for a moment looked stedfastly at them, as she heard their request, then bending her eyes upon the floor, after a moment's hesitation, said she would with pleasure comply with it, and hastily quitted the room.

From that interview an intimacy commenced between the lodgers, which every week increased. Mrs. Stevenson, who soon told them that she painted in water colours for her support, often came and spent the morning in Mrs. Fielding's company when Frances was pursuing her vocation abroad ; sometimes she even passed the evenings with Frances and her mother, except when Harry or any other stray visitor chanced to call upon them, and then she in general precipitately retired from the room. Harry, indeed, who, from the description his mother and sister gave of her kindness towards them, had a natural desire to see her, felt vexed at this, because he never could procure himself that pleasure, though he very often tried for it, since, unluckily enough, Mrs. Fielding's apartment possessed two doors, one which led into the front passage of the house, and another into the back, and thus Mrs. Stevenson generally made her escape through the last named place of exit, when any person made his appearance at the

other. However, if Harry Fielding did not see Mrs. Stevenson, he always heard enough about her whenever he came to visit his mother and sister, for they talked of her so continually and in such terms of affection, that at last he one day declared, as Frances was praising her, that he would plant himself against the door through which she invariably made her retreat, and not suffer her to leave the room till he had taken a good look at her. But, as may be supposed, this was a resolution more easily spoken than performed, for a full month passed away, and still Harry had not seen Mrs. Stevenson, though she continued to be as intimate as ever with his family.

The young widow, indeed, seemed to shun all society, and therefore it was not astonishing that she should avoid Harry's, though sometimes asked not to do so by his mother and sister. Very sad at times did Mrs. Stevenson seem when not actually exerting herself to please her new friends, but not one word of her own sorrow did she ever mention to them save that her

husband had died but a short while since and had left her with scarcely any resources excepting those which she possessed in her own talents. Frances, however, felt that her tale could only be a very mournful one, and continually did she wish to speak a single word of sympathy, to soothe the cares which she almost imagined were stronger than her own ; but the lips of Mrs. Stevenson were sealed upon the subject of her past life, and Frances was too delicate to venture upon any enquiry, which she thought might create a pang of pain in the bosom of her friend. Mrs. Stevenson, however, was not so scrupulous with regard to other peoples' feelings as with her own, and sometimes she ventured slight questions about the Fieldings' misfortunes, which exceedingly distressed and annoyed Frances. One evening in particular, though perhaps the circumstances which called forth her pointed enquiries respecting them rather excused the freedom she took, she addressed her in a manner well calcu-

lated to excite her surprise. It was upon the receipt of very distressing intelligence, and in the absence of Mrs. Fielding, who had one evening retired early to rest, that she did so. The two friends were sitting working together, when the maid-servant came in and handed Frances a letter from her brother, which she opened as quickly as possible; for he had not paid them his usual Sunday visit, and she was eager to know the cause of his not having done so. The intelligence the little note contained was disastrous and explanatory enough; for Harry wrote to tell her an arrest for debt had prevented him calling on them as was his wont, and that he was now comfortably lodged in the Queen's Bench prison at the suit of a horse-dealer with whom he had contracted some debts just before the commencement of their troubles, which he had entirely forgotten hitherto, and for the settlement of which he had not now the money.

“The fellow has owed me a grudge,”

wrote he, “ ever since I exposed his trickery and extortion to Joseph Kingston ; and that is why he is so hard upon me at present. Moreover, he imagines my mother will come forward and relieve me directly—a hundred pounds, he says, is not so vast a sum to spare out of her savings—the deuce knows where he found out she had savings, Fan, since you and I don’t know where they are. As to the twenty or thirty pounds she has by her, Fan, don’t allow mother to beggar herself in my behalf, though I know she will instantly feel inclined to do so—let your good sense back mine in this matter, and make her keep what she has, else, to speak plainly, you may both of you shake hands with starvation. Think of mother’s annual attack of winter rheumatism, before which money vanishes like fairies’ gifts, remember your own earnings are but small and uncertain and finally hear reason, hear truth, hear this; Jones must let me out in the course of a few weeks, for as I told him he is

more likely to get paid by allowing me to gain a weekly salary, out of which I could save money to do so, than by keeping me here in utter idleness. He reckons, however, upon my mother's assistance; I wonder how the crotchet came into his head that she had money, but he will reckon without his host. Come and see me, Fan, as soon as you like, and because this is a disagreeable sort of domicile to visit alone, bring our old cook Hannah with you; she wont deny you her company, I know, for ever since we left Lincoln's Inn, the good old creature has been continually visiting me with baskets of apples and pears which she brings from her daughter's in the country, fancying, no doubt, that they can even now soothe the sorrows of Master Harry as efficaciously as they did in his younger days. You see I am in good spirits, dearest Fan, so do not you be cast down—the old screw must let me out very shortly. The greatest plague of the business is, that Holloway of course

cannot retain me in his employ if I am long kept in durance, and therefore when I get out of this infernal place—I beg your pardon, Fan, for using so disreputable an expression in a lady's letter—when I get out I say, I shall not have any sort of employment to turn to. But courage! my back can bear a much greater burden than it at present does, before it will break, so I shall not despair, since a hundred things of which we now have not the slightest idea, may in time turn up, and lift me to the sunny side of Fortune's wheel, so let not your dear eyes, sweet sister mine, rain heavy showers of tears over the untoward intelligence I have communicated to you; but tell it to my mother with as pleasant a smile as you can; and with a kiss, believe me ever,

“Your affectionate brother,

“HARRY FIELDING.”

Frances sobbed heavily as she finished this letter; she felt it was the worst blow they had yet received, she knew not when

or how they should recover from its effects, for she saw no way in which they could help Harry out of his difficulties. Mrs. Stevenson seemed to suffer from the agitation she witnessed in her young friend, and after a moment's pause, she approached her, twined her arms round her waist, then asked, in the sweet soothing accents of woman's sympathy, what caused her grief?

And Frances, who had long felt she was a real friend, only pointed to the letter, and bade her read it. Mrs. Stevenson did so, changed colour during its perusal, and afterwards stood for some moments in silence with the little note trembling in her shaking hand.

"Have you no friends," at length asked she in a hurried, faltering tone, "have you no friends from whom you could absolutely claim relief?"

"No, no," replied Frances, "only Mr. Winkelmann, and he is half ruined by joining in my father's unfortunate speculations—we cannot in conscience ask him for the

sum Harry requires to set him free—'tis above two hundred pounds."

Mrs. Stevenson rose restlessly from her chair, and her dark blue eyes flashed with an impatient light, as she appeared to hesitate upon some words she was about to speak ; then after a pause of some minutes she bowed her head upon her hand, and thus addressed her young companion.

"Frances," she said, hastily, "in my better days I was once very intimate with a friend of yours—a Miss Childe—and pardon me, excuse me, through her I learnt a good deal of your past history." Once more the speaker paused in seeming irresolution, and then she more hurriedly said—"You and yours have laid the Chillingworth family under the deepest obligations—why not apply to them for the aid you need?"

"To them," replied Frances, in wondering bewilderment, as she heard her new friend utter the name which had, for so long, lain silent in her heart; "to them?"

she repeated, with a burst of sudden indignation, that lighted her soft blue eyes with a burning ray of living fire, and painted her pale cheek with a vivid crimson hue, "no—never!"

"Not even to Lord Ravenshill," continued Mrs. Stevenson, with still more emotion, as she drew nearer to Frances, and fixed her deep searching eyes upon her countenance, "not even to him whom you and your brother saved from starvation? Gentle sister—for sister I will call you—your pride is above your reason—he must—he ought to—he will aid you."

Frances rose, her voice half choked with sobs, as this allusion to her former lover brought the tide of grief and wronged affection uppermost in her heart.

"I do not know—I cannot tell how you know all this," she said; "I—I apply again to Lord Ravenshill."

And her voice died away in a long, low sob, as her friend, re-echoing her words, eagerly rejoined,

"Again? have you then applied at all?"

Frances turned towards Mrs. Stevenson with an expression of haughtiness upon her pale features, singularly different from their usually gentle one.

"Your enquiries overstep the limits of our friendship," she hurriedly replied, with a flashing eye, and trembling voice, "and you must, therefore, excuse me, Mrs. Stevenson, if I now leave you to tell my mother this sad intelligence."

"Frances, you are angry with me," said Mrs. Stevenson, sadly, as she saw her about to leave the room, "and yet—and yet, if I have been too quick—too rude, in my questions, it is because I feel for you and others—so deeply."

There was a moment's hesitation on the part of Frances as she stood at the threshold of the door, through which she was about to disappear; then she turned back again towards Mrs. Stevenson, and answered, gently,

"I know it—I feel it—but promise never more to mention one word of the past to me."

The young widow gazed for some moments earnestly into her eyes—bent forward, and kissed her ; but uttered no reply ; nor, indeed, did Frances stay to hear one, for as she spoke the last words, she hastily left the room.

A heavy blow was Harry's detention in the Queen's Bench to his mother and sister ; it shattered the health of the former more and more, and gradually wore down the stronger spirits and constitution of the latter, for the creditor was inexorable, and could not be prevailed upon to enter into any sort of compromise. He required the demand in full, and as he would persist in believing that Mrs. Fielding possessed a couple of hundreds of her own, he hoped he should, at length, work upon her maternal love, and induce her to settle it. Thus week after week he retained Harry in jail, though the latter did not fail to assure him that there was no likelihood of his mother's doing so ; but a griping man rarely believes a debtor's account of himself, however true it may be, and Jones, the horse dealer, did

not believe Harry's, and, in consequence, the poor prisoner was cut off from all hopes of retrieving his present prospects.

Frances went continually to see her brother, and though he always tried to appear in excellent spirits, she easily saw that the hopeless duration of his confinement gradually lessened them. Very sadly, therefore, at times, did she leave him to return to her sick mother, who had now become too feeble to move out of doors, and could not visit her son, though she much wished to do so. Yet, in the midst of their troubles, they had the consolation of feeling they possessed one friend, whose kindness never faltered, and this was Mrs. Stevenson. Untiringly she tended Mrs. Fielding, when Frances was obliged to leave her to fulfil her engagements abroad, and unweariedly she strove to rouse her from the deep grief which was making terrible inroads upon her health. To the poor invalid, she seemed a second daughter—to Frances, a gentle sister—and to Harry, as usual

by the latter, were all her good offices told.

And thus one sad month wore away for the Fieldings, unpitied and uncouraged as they were by any one save Mrs. Stevenson.

CHAPTER IV.

Sir, all the arguments which have been brought to represent poverty as no evil, prove it evidently to be a great evil.

Boswell's Life of Johnson.

THREE months had poor Harry lingered in the Queen's Bench, keeping up his sister's spirits and his own as well as he could when he was one day surprised to see the latter enter his room with a sadder look than usual, and as the unfortunate rarely glance towards the sunny aspects of life, he immediately thought a fresh trouble had overtaken them, and in a rather alarmed tone asked what had happened to distress her.

"Distress me?" answered Frances, and she essayed to speak cheerfully; "nothing! I have only come to tell you some, some

news—that I know not whether you will like indeed ; but it is not distressing.”

And she bent down her head for a few minutes, and a slight flush tinged her pale cheek as her brother again asked her what it was.

“I am engaged to become the wife of Mr. Harvey,” replied Frances, in a quiet, clear tone, yet not till after a few moments hesitation, “of Mr. Harvey, Harry—that is all I have to tell you.” And she turned her large, calm eyes upon her brother with an earnest, searching glance, as for a moment he remained silent in evident surprise, then she asked in the same low, unfaltering voice—“Is it not best that I should?”

“I thought you said you would never marry Harvey,” were the only words Harry could utter in reply.

“Yes, so I did,” answered Frances, as calmly as before, “but I have changed my mind now, Harry ; that is not astonishing, considering how things have changed with me.” And then as she saw her brother

still looking at her in wonder, she continued in the same low, yet unhesitating tone, and without the slightest trace of grief upon her apparently passionless features, "He is much older than I am—people will say that I marry him for his money, and they will only speak the truth. He called upon us once or twice as I told you before, Harry; the last time he came, he offered to make me his wife, although he must have known that were I to become so, it could only be for the sake of his wealth. I said I could not love him, that I had loved elsewhere, and he told me he knew it, but that he had understood the engagement was now broken off; he asked whether it was so, and I said yes. Brother, I do not think he would have again offered to marry me, had he not seen all our wretchedness. He was very good and kind, and—and when he seemed to say my mother should once more have all the comforts she once had, that she should live with me—I consented, I did not do wrong, did I, Harry?"

And Frances looked enquiringly and

anxiously in her brother's face, who only answered—

“You do not love him, Frances.”

“But I love no one else,” replied she, faintly, as she averted her eyes from his earnest look, “no one else. Do you think, Harry, that I still continue to love Lord Ravenshill?”

“Perhaps so,” he rejoined, sharply, and bitterly, as he watched her changing cheek; “love endures; even where it has been the most wronged.”

“I do not love him,” returned Frances, in a low, clear tone, and her dark violet eyes were raised steadily to her brother's countenance, and while she spoke, not a change passed over her fair, pale features, or unsettled their quiet and almost lifeless expression. “I would do much for him even now, I wish him to be happy, true; but were he to kneel at my feet, and entreat me to become his, with all the eloquence that heart, voice, love could lend him, I would not do so. No, no, for he it is who when faith stretched out her hand

for the substance of her hopes, did not even deign to give her their shadows, he it is who consigned my brother to a debtor's prison, tortured every feeling of my heart, and though I have not spoken of the past till now, I have not the less condemned him within my mind, as he ought to be condemned. Ungenerous and false as he is, he cannot be to me what he once was, for in him all faith, truth and honour lie dead. Harry, I told Mr. Harvey of this change in my sentiments, although I did not explain how or why it had taken place—said, that although I might grieve for him who once had my heart, I did not, could not love him. It was pain and grief to me to say all this; but I felt that a contract for the altar should be religiously just—his and mine is—brother, you know all now—I have not done wrong, have I?”

And a sad, calm smile settled down upon the countenance of Frances, as she added—

“I have placed my fate in the hands of a kind, just man, I can honour, though I may

not love him. I do not go as a hypocrite to God's holy ordinance, not with a broken heart, or despairing spirit. I go to do that which I will perform without one shadow of deceit, and Mr. Harvey is content to take me as I am."

Harry, who, during his sister's last words, had become paler and paler, here suddenly looked up, and said—

"You have done this, Frances, for me, as well as for my mother ; you think that she can then help me ; but Fan, Fan, your unhappiness will rankle in my heart to my dying day, if I should chance to see you made miserable by this match."

"But if you do not?" replied Frances, half averting her face from her brother's anxious look, "if you do not? Do you think that to see mama die from grief and actual poverty will be less unhappiness than becoming the wife of so good a man as Mr. Harvey? from whom, too, I have concealed nothing of my own feelings, and never will? I can do my duty towards him, Harry, because I shall have no secret weight upon

my heart—and he will aid me in it—and and—and—how can I be unhappy?”

Harry Fielding bent down his head, dashed away a tear, and, in a low, thick voice, answered—

“And you never thought of me in this transaction, Fan?”

Frances coloured deeply, for a moment, and looked troubled.

“It was mama’s health which induced me to marry,” she, at length, replied.

“And you had not a thought about me then in this matter?” asked Harry, with a quick, searching glance at the disturbed expression of her countenance.

Frances seemed as if she would willingly have avoided answering the question; but Harry repeated it.

“He said he would treat you as a brother,” she slowly replied.

“And how was that?” again demanded Harry.

“Why,” answered Frances, in a vexed tone, and with a forced smile, “why, you question me as if you were cross-examin-

ing a witness, Harry. He only asked whether I thought you would have any objections to become a partner in his firm, as Gilbert, his present one, is about to retire. He said, he knew you were an active lawyer, and would make a creditable figure by-and-bye."

Harry looked thunderstruck.

"Harvey will do this for me?" he exclaimed ; then he added, rapidly—"Frances, you are sacrificing your own happiness to secure my mother's and mine. Listen to me: I do not wish you to waist one thought upon him, who has too darkly engraved his name on both our hearts to be spoken of without bitterness ; but, Fan, you may make a happier marriage than this—may find a husband more suited to your years and to your taste."

"But not a kinder or more generous one!" answered she, and she lifted her large dark eyes to her brother's face with a calm, tearless, light-shining within them.

"Harry, my promise is given, and I must fulfil it. After the pain I had in explain-

ing matters to Mr. Harvey, you may be certain I have not begun that which I do not intend to finish. Everything is settled, I have even told mama all the particulars." And Frances here drew closer to her brother, and laid her hand upon his arm to gain his more earnest attention. "Mama said," continued she, "that she was glad I had resolved to marry Mr. Harvey, when once she heard of Lord Ravenshill's note, the contents of which I last night told her. She said my health would not bear the exertions I am now continually making to attend her, besides those with which I am trying to gain a small pittance for our daily housekeeping. She told me, I appeared thin and ill," and truly her pale worn cheek did not belie her mother's observation.

"I am ill," added she, a moment afterwards, "it is the hard work kills me—I know it is."

Frances, however, did not say that the hard work, though it might have borne her in secret to the grave, would have been more agreeable to her than all the luxurious

ease she could gain by marrying Mr. Harvey, had not the latter alternative relieved her mother and brother from their utter poverty, neither did she say that the plea of her own ill-health was only urged to smooth the way for Harry's approbation of the match—yet this was the truth, and her brother guessed it was so ; for since childhood they had been linked together by the bonds of strong affection which easily led them to read the movements of each other's hearts, and drawing her to him, he said—

“ Yes, you are ill, Fan ; but this marriage I fear will only add a whiter hue to that pale cheek of yours. Frances,” he continued, more earnestly, “ tell me on your faith, on your word, tell me truly whether you can be happy in this marriage. Never think of me—Fortune is a fickle jade, to-morrow she may shower the favours upon me that she withholds to-day—count Harvey's promises as nothing—think of yourself only for Heaven's sake—”

“ And my mother?” said Frances, half-reproachfully, and, as for a moment she

silenced Harry with those words, she hastily added, " I wonder you think so much about your scruples of conscience, and my unhappiness, when I tell you that I really believe nothing but change of scene and brighter hopes can restore mama's health. This wearisome poverty, this living from hand to mouth bears her to the grave. Look at my hand, Harry, it is thin and transparent enough, is it not? Well, mama's is twice as thin as mine. Now we shall all live happily when I marry Mr. Harry."

" Happy?" echoed her brother.

" Yes," she rejoined, " I do not intend to render myself unhappy, Harry,—I do not mean to live a very monument of grief at my husband's side. Smiles he shall have, and not false ones—for kindness such as his must ever meet with grateful smiles—love, too, as much as I now can love. It may be something of sadness will dwell within my heart, but that shall not quench the tide of gratitude or esteem, or duty;

it shall not sadden others. I shall be happy."

"Would to God it may be so!" said Harry; then he added—"Is it soon to take place?"

"In a month's time," replied Frances, still as calmly as before.

"But," she continued, "you seem dissatisfied with the match even yet, and I must come and talk to you about it again. Mr. Harvey will be up to town in a week, and then he will see you, Harry—he much regrets that he cannot possibly leave Durham before then."

And after some more indifferent conversation, Frances Fielding left her brother and walked home.

Restlessly enough Harry pondered over her communication, for the more he saw himself benefited by the step she was about to take, the more he felt uneasy at it. The happiness of his only sister was of much consequence to him, and he dreaded lest her present determination, proceeded as it did

from a desire of helping him as well as their mother to their former affluence, should too bitterly task the gentle and wounded heart of the young girl, and with a strange presentiment of evil, he felt that her misery would be sealed as soon as the marriage vows were past, although he knew Mr. Harvey to be an honourable and upright man. He did not give her credit for the wish she had expressed of escaping from the hopeless poverty she endured; he knew her mind was too strong to sicken beneath such a burden, unless the fate of some persons dearer to her than herself depended on its non-continuance; and, as we have before seen, he was right in this conclusion. She had said she did not love Lord Ravenshill, and he tried to believe her, though he knew from his own experience that love will exist for a long, long time after faith and esteem are gone—he tried to believe Frances was wiser than himself—than most mortals—but she was not. Though she had now no respect for the

man she had once loved, and therefore felt that however circumstances might change before or after her marriage no thoughts of the possibility of being happy with one who had acted as he had done, would disturb her in her duty towards her future husband ; still her heart retained a latent principle of tenderness for him, that she could not entirely vanquish, but which she perfectly concealed from Harry in her next interview, when she more patiently and calmly detailed her reasons for marrying, and at length reconciled him to the match. Harry, indeed, with all his scruples, and although he felt uneasy at being himself benefited by it, did not fail to see that, if Frances could regard Mr. Harvey with any degree of affection, the marriage was likely to bring her a good share of this world's happiness, since the latter was literally rolling in riches, and was moreover a kind-hearted man. Yet Harry knew these were not the reasons that made Frances accept Mr. Harvey, and he felt her marriage was no mercenary or deceitful desecration of

God's altar ; but a firm, pure sacrifice of inclination to the dictates of duty.

Harry had yet to remain a week in the Queen's Bench, before he saw his future brother-in-law, for urgent business detained the latter in the north ; nevertheless he received a letter from him in which he mentioned his engagement with Frances, and delicately alluded to his wish of settling Mrs. Fielding's affairs as soon as he came to town. During this week, however, Harry was deprived of the pleasure of his sister's visits, for she unexpectedly caught a severe cold, and the weather being extremely stormy, Mrs. Fielding obliged her to stay within the house, though Frances obeyed her very reluctantly, as she knew Harry liked to see her, and moreover wanted some books which she had promised to bring him. One day, however, when she was lamenting the necessity of her remaining in doors, and proclaiming she saw no way to remedy her brother's disappointment, Mrs. Stevenson, who was sitting with her,

suddenly raised her eyes from her work and said, that if she had no objection she would take the books to Mr. Fielding, as she was going to the Queen's Bench that very day to visit an old friend. Frances looked surprised at this announcement on the part of the lady who had so studiously seemed to avoid her brother, and at first would not hear of troubling her with the books, till Mrs. Stevenson steadily persisted in desiring that she would, averring their delivery would cost her neither time or inconvenience, as she was obliged to go to the same place on that very morning ; at last Frances suffered her to take them, and, not without a little astonishment, thanked her for her kindness.

It was then as Harry had just finished a morning walk within the precincts of the jail, that he was told a lady requested to see him, and imagining she was his sister, he obeyed the summons with alacrity. When however he entered Mrs. Stevenson's presence he drew back with considerable hesitation, as his eye lighted upon her tall

and elegant figure, so different from the slight, sylphlike one of Frances, and he imagined he had been called to her by a mistake. But the young widow instantly acknowledged his approach by a slight inclination of her head, and drawing her black crape veil closely over her face, advanced to meet him ; apparently too, at the same moment she attempted to speak, and though she did not succeed in her endeavour, still Harry perceived that she knew him, and after hastily glancing at her, he asked to what cause he was indebted for her visit.

Mrs. Stevenson explained the reason of her visiting the Bench in rather a confused tone of voice, and it was her very visible agitation, perhaps, that made Harry start, and eagerly turn towards her with a look of curiosity, as in reply he asked the name of the lady who had so kindly fulfilled his sister's commission. There was a pause of some length upon the part of his companion before she answered ; and then she said with

a hard effort to suppress some rising emotion—

“It is better to tell you at once, Mr. Fielding, since I came here, not only to execute my promise to Frances, but also to fulfil a purpose of my own. I am Florence Lovaine.” And raising her thick crape veil she revealed a countenance so worn and faded from what Harry remembered it that he almost started back in surprise, and for the moment stood speechless. “You scarcely know me,” continued Lady Florence in a calmer voice, “I might then have easily risked meeting you in G—— Street, as Mrs. Stevenson, where, notwithstanding the wishes of Mrs. Fielding and your sister to the contrary, I always shunned you.”

“No, no,” half unconsciously said Harry as he stood gazing at her ladyship’s still beautiful, but changed and grief-stricken countenance, “those features, round which the dreams of the past were centred, they, they could not be forgotten!”

He had loved her; he still loved her;

but years, change, circumstances had separated them for ever ; her heart had, he thought, forgotten his image, though his had not forgotten hers, and he strove to conquer the sudden emotion which overwhelmed him. He glanced at her mourning weeds, and tried to feel that another love, a bitter sorrow forbade him to recall the past, tried to think of her more calmly—to think of her as the sister of a faithless friend, as the child of those from whom he had received but contumely and insult, and at length coldly addressing her he asked for what purpose she had condescended to visit him? But she was weeping—though with her head partly averted, she endeavoured to hide her tears ; and Harry's forced composure passed away.

“Lady Florence,” he said, in an eager, gentle tone, “dear Lady Florence, why is this?”

She looked up at him with a look of deprecating entreaty.

“I will tell you,” she replied in a choked voice, “but have patience with me! I

came to explain, to ask—since my husband's death I have been living in the same house as your mother and sister, though they have no idea who I am—and I would know—oh! I would know, whether Horace, my brother, is informed of your present misfortunes? Where is he? why has he not helped you? is he as callous as the rest of the world? Does he leave his old friends to weather through penury and disgrace as best they may? Tell me, if you would not drive me distracted, for I know nothing of him, I have been disowned by my family—but never, never by him, for he sought out me and Maurice in Germany, and would have succoured us, only Maurice, my husband, was too proud to accept aid at his hands, and then, then he lost all trace of us—but he could not surely have lost trace of you. Has he forgotten you? I have been hoping, praying against that—against that! But tell me the truth.”

And she walked up close to Harry's side, gazed earnestly at him, as a sharp, con-

temptuous expression gradually grew upon his features, eagerly scanned it, and turned pale.

"I, his sister, have a right to know," continued she, "tell me—has he heard of your misfortunes?"

"Heard of them?" repeated Harry, with a bitter laugh, that almost seemed to curdle the blood in Lady Florence's veins, till as he saw her anxious look, and thought of her womanly kindness towards his mother and sister, in her assumed character of Mrs. Stevenson, he suddenly changed his tone to a low, sad one—"Do not ask anything more of him, Lady Florence," he said, "time changes many men, and if it has changed him, it has only done its usual work. But you," he added more hurriedly "you I have at least to thank for your kindness to my mother and sister,"

She did not seem to heed his latter words, she only reiterated almost gaspingly,

"Has Horace proved false? I will know—I will know, I will ask Frances."

Harry looked at her for a moment, he

saw her features still pale with anxiety, and said—

“False? I know not how you construe the word ; but he intimated to us when we asked him to help us in our distress, that he no longer considered himself our friend—that all claims between us had fallen to the ground.”

“Horace—my brother—my best beloved one—no, no, he could not say so—he has known distress and pain and penury—he could not say so,” exclaimed Lady Florence, hurriedly, “and your sister—oh, what did he say to her?”

A deeper flush mounted to Harry's brow as he heard her ladyship's last question, and he hesitated ere he answered it, then with a curling lip, and a bitter look, he said—

“The same.”

“He did not!” exclaimed Lady Florence with a sudden look of indignation passing over her fine features, “he could not. I will not believe it!”

But the now calm and contemptuous expression of Harry's countenance, too truly

bore out the truth of his assertion, and Lady Florence, as if reading her brother's condemnation in it, stood gazing at him for awhile as motionless as a statue.

In a few minutes, however, she spoke again, and gradually becoming more calm, by dint of various and searching questions, drew most of the particulars she wished to hear from Harry's lips. Lady Florence suffered no consideration for his feelings or her own, to stop her in this enquiry ; she demanded it as a right, she pursued it as a task of duty, and never slackened in it till she saw her brother's conduct placed in the light in which Harry and Frances regarded it. Then she paused, and a dark shade of thought settled on her brow ; suddenly she turned round and gazing eagerly into Harry's face for a moment or two, said, " I go from hence to the home of your mother and sister ; there is an actual necessity for my doing so ; but for the comfort of all parties I shall leave the place in two or three days. During the time I shall have to remain there, promise, Mr. Field-

ing, that you will not allow my real name to become known to them by letter, or word of mouth—promise me this.”

Earnestly she appealed to him, and Harry, after a short pause for thought, readily assured her he would not, since he saw that it was indeed best that Mrs. Fielding and Frances should not know who their kind friend really was, until after they had parted, lest unaccountable feelings of discomfort should render their separation more unpleasant than it otherwise would be. And apparently satisfied with the promise he gave her, Lady Florence offered her hand to Harry in token of adieu, then, without a spoken farewell, drew her veil down over her face, and quitted the precincts of the prison.

CHAPTER. V.

A brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs.

Do not crush me with more love,
Than lies in the word, " Pardon !"

Ion.

It is a strange thing for a man to look back to the remembrances of past years, and to compare them with a present state of his mind ; to examine himself and see the evanescent nature of some thoughts and feelings which were deemed all-enduring, and the strengthened life of others, whose very existence was once scarcely noticed, or was at least deemed too weak to be much remarked or relied on ; to trace his guiding principles from childhood to youth, the

vicissitudes of pleasure and pain, which he has experienced, till linking each remembered thought and word, and action in one vast chain, the whole scenery of his past life is truly pictured out in its darkness and its light. To him who attempts to do this, memory at first presents but a tangled tracery of outlines, that the unobservant would suffer to remain in their mind's eye as such; but which the skilful reader of life and its purposes patiently traces back till its starting point is reconnoitred, till in its different windings a determined plan is discovered though its threads are here and there broken off or dashed aside through the weakness or carelessness of the mind, whose faint impress is thus recalled to view.

Life is not made up of unconnected fragments; a chain of circumstances framed so as to act or be acted upon by the peculiar characteristics of each individual mind, is linked with it from its infancy, and lengthening as the other expands affords opportunities to the latter for using or abusing

its several passions or faculties as the weakness of man allows, or the will of Providence directs. There are but two kinds of circumstances that bear directly on our being ; one over which we have no control, and beneath the influence of which our minds exercise their more passive and silent qualities ; the other, presented to us for the sake of drawing our free will into play, upon our principles of rectitude. Yet both kinds are indissolubly connected with the mind's trials and growth ; both tend, if rightly considered and acted upon, to its more perfect and peculiar development. No incident comes to fill up the chasms of life by mere chance ; each comes to influence and draw forth the powers of the mind, and therefore it is unwise to let one circumstance pass without at least endeavouring to examine how its relations act, or may be acted upon by the faculties of our souls, since by neglecting to do so, the connecting links of many a bright reality may be lost. No—life is not a maze without a plan—each mind has its determinate field of exer-

tion, a determinate set of trials and opportunities mapped out in the future that it may use to its benefit, or abuse to its bane.

Somewhat in this style, while the gorgeous light of a true southern sunset was streaming through the half closed casements of a rich apartment in one of the principal hotels in Lisbon, mused Arthur Lovaine, as he lay on a couch near an open window to enjoy the breeze of evening that for the first time cooled the sultry heat of the day. Two years had elapsed since he left the English shore to seek for health in a more favourable clime ; in bitterness of spirit he left it—just entering upon a wiser course of life than that which he had until then pursued, he was stopped short in the career he felt himself disposed to run by the approaches of that insidious disease which so often bows the heads of the young and the lovely in the dust—England's own fatal dower to her sons and daughters of beauty—consumption. And for a time he was obliged to forego exertion alike of the mind

and of the body, to lose the days whose every moment he would have employed to better purposes. The earnestness, too, with which he had pursued his new avocations for two years before the malady assailed him, had aggravated and hastened its attacks. Painfully feeling his own deficiencies, there was an actual craving on the part of Lord Arthur to redeem the time he had so idly spent, an energy of purpose that worked his mind on, till the mental powers failed beneath the inflexible will, and sickened over the efforts they made to overcome their wants—yet sickened but to feel ashamed of their own weakness, to renew their efforts once again. But the disease, which perhaps from his childhood's years had marked him for its own, at length appeared, and a still small voice warned him, somewhat heavily, that the hour of retribution had come in which he would feel that a power besides the will of man overruled the plans of each human being's life. His health rapidly failed him, and then the constant activity of his mind only served

to hasten the arrival of the moment, in which he was advised to give up the new duties he was so creditably fulfilling, and to seek on a foreign shore the rest and quiet which he could not find in England. This was bitter advice for Lord Arthur to follow, and he tried to ask why the decrees of Providence launched so harsh a sentence against one who for some time past had been rapidly casting off his early errors, and striving to make his manhood contrast advantageously with his youth. He did not see that although his intellect had been improved, his passions tamed, his thoughts, words, and deeds, directed towards the right, he was yet but the world's pupil ; he did not see that he only worked to gain his own self-esteem which the words of a young girl had rudely shocked—worked to gain the world's applause by deeds of truth, power, and splendour ; yet it was so—Lord Arthur had exchanged the toil of dissipation, for that of labour, and though he imagined he felt and acted upon the truths Annie Cummins had so unceremoniously

told him, the real fact was, that he only understood their bearings upon the wisdom of this world, notwithstanding his partial admission to the contrary during his last interview with her. He deceived himself; he saw that even to live for the world's, his own, and Annie's esteem beneficially changed his character from its former selfish indolence, and led on in the path of existence, by the hope of mere earthly rewards, he scarcely thought of winning the approbation of the Creator from whom he derived the springs of being he possessed, or if he chanced at times to do so, he imagined he paid Him due homage by becoming so much better than he had been. Lord Arthur's heart was just then a mere chaos of feeling, that in the hurry of business he never thoroughly examined, though his mind urged on by its wish of cultivation often and clearly fathomed those of the living and the dead. But the hour at length came when the glass which he had so successfully turned upon others' feelings reflected back his own

—the fiat was spoken—disease had its victim, and on the wakeful sick couch in a foreign land, the better influences of the heart did their work, and taught him that he was not so deserving of Heaven's good will as he had hitherto supposed himself to be.

“Is it right?” whispered Conscience, “that the heart and mind so long misused, should be instantly put in possession of their altered wishes, and that Heaven should by no trial teach them the want of patience, and the insufficiency of man's will alone to execute the purposes of his soul? do they deserve to meet with an instant acquittal of their past errors?” Lord Arthur's heart answered no! He had entered upon a wild career of mad ambition without a thought, save for his own satisfaction; he had worked less for others than he had for himself; and it was only the shame of his past life, that he had striven to forget and overcome before the blow was struck, which withered the strength of his efforts, and laid him low upon the couch of sickness, to think

of the utter worthlessness of the distinctions for which he toiled, unless the undercurrent of his exertions were founded upon some better principle of action than that of merely worldly esteem.

A thought also came to him in those hours, which brought poor comfort to his soul ; and it was this:—The long efforts he had made to attain the height of his ambition, had they been purified by the wish of gaining it for the sake of doing good, would not, he knew, have been thrown away—even though present circumstances had made them end in nothing—for he felt they would have been registered above as minutes of his heart's actions ; but now he was convinced that they were esteemed by the All-seeing One as utterly worthless—since they had only the stamp of his own selfishness upon them. This was a bitter thought ; and Lord Arthur mused bitterly upon it, and resolved that, if ever he should regain his strength, he would well control, and watch his motives for action.

“When I shall regain my strength,” murmured he, unconsciously, as the inward thoughts of his heart pressed more forcibly upon it, and expressed themselves in words. “When I shall regain my strength?” he murmured, and he raised himself from the sofa, on which he lay, and turned his countenance towards the setting sun ; “but then—then still I shall be helpless.”

Even so! from the large, blue eyes, yet bent towards the golden west the light of vision, had passed away many, many months since ; for, of late years, their constant and over exertion, and the general debility of his frame had weakened, and almost totally destroyed, their peculiar sense ; and though, as if guided by the warmth of the sunbeams cast upon them, they were fixed upon the brilliant luminary in the distance, still the bright orbs were sightless, useless, and dark to all images of beauty. And this was the severest affliction of all those Lord Arthur had experienced ; for, until it came upon him, though bound down to comparative inacti-

vity of mind by illness, still in the glories and aspects of the material world, which he received into the soul through the eye, there was ample room for reflection ; but now a very darkness of the spirit, at times seemed to envelop and weigh him down to earth with a deep sense of the utter weariness of a miserable and useless existence. Yet he still tried to keep his spirit unmoved by misfortune ; tried still to further its expansion towards knowledge and wisdom ; but his efforts had been, hitherto, unattended with success, and in the long, sleepless watches of the night, he had only the power to grieve over and dread the coming future.

At the present moment that future, with its long array of broken hopes, passed before his mind. He thought of Annie, from whom he had not heard since he parted with her in Somersetshire ; he asked himself whether she would now become the wife of so helpless an invalid as he was, and his own heart, closely questioned, answered she would

not. There was something in her character, he thought, that betokened a strong, ambitious spirit, which would either centre its energies upon the efforts of the mind of him she loved, or else upon her own ; it seemed to him, that she would scorn one who must, of necessity, be all his life a useless burthen upon others. He felt she was almost his equal, however strangely she endeavoured to make him believe to the contrary, and, therefore, he imagined that the temptation of bestowing on her his own superior rank, and comparative riches, could never make her his. But here Lord Arthur staid the current of his thoughts ; for the idea of his having—even for a moment—reckoned on Annie's consenting to become his wife, merely for the sake of his wealth or title, tortured him ; and he sickened from the memory of past days—strove to nerve his heart for the worst—and when he had pictured himself forsaken by Annie, he asked his heart in the exertion of what qualities, the affection of what friend or relative, should he find a

relief or support, against the bitterness of his present affliction.

Should he turn to his mother for comfort—for help, in the miserable—perhaps, the long life before him? She was kind—she idolized him—and he loved her; yet, not even a son's affection could blind Lord Arthur to the weakness of her mind—which fashion and caprice had long since rendered frivolous and vain. There might be an intercourse of affection between them—but nothing more—his wiser and better feelings he knew must remain pent up in silence within his bosom, since he could not speak them to one from whom he was certain he should meet with no reply.

To his father should he turn?—his cold, proud father? He shunned the thought of doing so.

And his brother!—he whom he deemed his worst enemy—he, the hypocrite, who, beneath the veil of surprise and overwhelming grief, had, in one interview,

worked out the hoarded vengeance of years? Could he turn to him? He was near him even now.

At the request of his father, who had received bad accounts of Lord Arthur's health, Horace met his brother at Lisbon, when, wearied with continual travelling, and, notwithstanding the advice of his physicians, he was preparing to return home. He met him, to watch over his embarkment, to accompany him to England, and this task, contrary to the wish of Lord Arthur himself, he determined to accomplish. He already had been with him about a month, surrounding him with those quiet attentions that are better liked in a sick room than more officious and obvious ones, and gradually Lord Arthur felt the dislike he had so long nourished, falter before his unobtrusive kindness. Horace, indeed, never entered Lord Arthur's presence with the air of a victim condemned to frequent society he detests, as some people would have done; nor did he designedly

give weight to the attention he paid him; he merely addressed him as a friend, humoured his caprices with almost the patience of a wife, and, finally, made the heart of his long estranged brother secretly yearn for the affection it had once so cruelly rejected. A proud man cannot patiently bear to see himself the object of obtrusive kindness—Lord Ravenshill's was not, and Lord Arthur loved him for it. And a change appeared in the latter's manner towards his brother; he seemed to wish for his company, detained him near him whenever he could, and slowly but surely he began to read Horace's past life rightly, to give him credit for the good feelings he seemed to possess, yet still he shrank back from all explanation of the past, for he dreaded openly to acknowledge the alteration in his feelings, till a change of conduct, on his own part, had, in some degree, softened the ill-will which he felt persuaded his brother must necessarily feel towards him for the bitterness of his early life; the

performance of a difficult task—particularly a task to which a good deal of the world's false shame adheres, is always put off to the very last moment. Yet Horace, with a thankful heart, noticed even this slight alteration in his brother's behaviour, and it gave him an earnest of better hopes and better days, and filled his heart with the first joy he had experienced since he had parted from her he loved—for still the image of Frances Fielding held sway over his heart, although he had not once heard from her since his departure—his love for her was undying.

Two days after the evening on which Lord Arthur lay musing in the fading light of the glorious sunset at Lisbon, and about the very time that Mr. Winkelmann set off for the Continent, after bidding good bye to Frances and her brother in Lincoln's Inn, on the bosom of the broad Bay of Biscay, a large and well-built steamer was hardly beset by one of those awful tempests, that occasionally visit its restless waters. The

storm, which had burst upon her, and still continued to rage in her vicinity, had completely cleared her decks, and destroyed her works; her engines were disabled, her wheel was broken, and left a helpless wreck to the mercy of the waves, the tempest violently carried her along with it in its course.

The vessel was of English make, and bound for England, and amongst her passengers were reckoned the two brothers of the Chillingworth family. She had left the sunny Portuguese coast when the Tagus was rippling in a golden sunlight, and as the graceful outlines of the city of Lisbon faded from her view, and she pursued her course down the magnificent mouth of the river, every sign in the bright southern sky promised her an easy voyage home; but as she receded more and more from the Portuguese and Spanish coasts, so faded the good omens that had attended her departure, and when she entered the Bay of Biscay, a heavy tempest was already swelling the waves, and darkening the

face of the cloudy sky. For three days the wind blew a perfect hurricane, and the vessel, after becoming rapidly disabled, was, by its power, at length, driven helplessly over the waters. Two perilous nights she passed upon the troubled deep, as she drifted amidst the darkness and the storm towards the rocky shores of Cornwall, while sea after sea dashed over her decks, and made even the Captain and his men marvel, that, shattered as she was, her timbers yet resisted the repeated shocks which assailed them. English sailors, however, have stout hearts, and her commander, who was a calm and gallant man, though he knew the imminent peril which attended every heave of the packet over the yawning waves, still hoped—perhaps, against all reasonable hope—that she would yet enter Falmouth harbour in safety. Even when the howling wind, and mighty waters threatened to rend her to pieces, when the forked lightning played round her, as if its streams of fire would gladly have finished the half-done work of its sister elements, when the cries

of the passengers below, and the muttered fears of his men, told him that all was lost, still he would not suffer himself to give way to despair, and onward the vessel sped on her storm-tracked way, with many true, brave hearts within her, though they beat with but little hope as to her ultimate fate.

It was upon the close of the third day since the commencement of the storm, that the crew of the disabled ship discerned the Cornish coast. With mingled hope and fear they discerned it—for they knew their vessel could not weather through another night at sea—and they hoped, almost madly, that, by some means or other, they should be able to gain the land; although they saw by a line of breakers, which they distinguished before them, when the stormy sky sent forth its running streams of vivid light, that they were on one of the most dangerous spots of the Cornish shore. There was no choice left them, however, whether

they would or would not, risk another night at sea in the shattered ship, or approach the shore over the foaming breakers, as the wind still held undisputed power over her, and drove her towards it with unremitting velocity.

It was full midnight ; the sky and ocean were enveloped in impenetrable darkness, save when the flashes of electric fluid burst from above with resplendent brilliancy, and, for a moment or two, revealed the terrific scene the tempest's power had conjured up on the broad surface of the waters, and heavy brow of the cloud-enshrouded heavens ; the captain stood near the poop of the vessel lashed fast to some of the remaining appurtenances of the deck, and a gentleman, who had shared in all the labors of the ship to the very last moment, maintained himself by his side in the same manner ; while the crew, awed by the stern calmness of their commander, and still vainly occupied in fruitless tasks for the

preservation of the vessel, worked at their several posts in perfect silence. Not a sound was heard for some minutes, save the howling of the wind and the dashing of the waves ; not a light was seen on deck or in the sky, while the lightning remained cradled in the storm clouds above, and enveloped in thick darkness, the wreck rode over the heaving water.

At length, this deep silence was broken by the gentleman who stood near the captain's side, although the accents of his voice amidst the noise of the warring elements reached no other ears but his whom he addressed.

"Where are we now, Captain Russell?" he asked, "do you know the line of coast which we are approaching?"

"Well enough," replied the captain, "since I was born and bred in its neighbourhood. Falmouth is far to the north, and we are now close upon Eagle's Nest. A few fishermen's huts, and your father's

house, my lord, are, I believe, the only human habitations hereabouts."

"I thought I knew the outlines of yonder rocks," replied his companion, after a moment's pause; "Eagle Nest! the home of one's youth, cannot be easily forgotten. And now, sir," he added, calmly, "tell me the truth in plain words, for I have long since discerned it in your manner—there is no hope for us—is there?"

The captain hesitated for a second or two, then answered in a low, cautious tone, though, even if he had pitched his voice in its loudest key, he could not have been heard at a yard's distance; "None; but keep my counsel, Lord Ravenshill, or my men will seize the spirits and meet death like brute beasts rather than reasonable creatures. They know the truth already in their souls; yet, as long as I maintain the slightest seeming of hope, they will do so, too."

"And the passengers?"

"Must still be kept in ignorance of the

real danger, or else all will be in confusion," replied the captain ; then he added, hastily, as a broad flash of lightning seemed to envelope the whole ship in flames, and to illumine the most distant part of the ocean, while a cry from his men reached his ear, and told him they were no longer to be supported by their commander's firmness.

"Eh ! we are nearer the shore than I thought we were—nearer death too—we have sped along at the foul fiend's pace, my lord ! it is time now to tell the poor creatures below the real extent of their danger—do that terrible piece of business for me—I must stay to watch these fellows."

Then, in the utter darkness that supervened between each flash of lightning, the crew, now lost to all sense of subordination, hurried to the boats, while Lord Ravenshill, holding fast by every piece of woodwork within his reach, with considerable difficulty pursued his way downstairs to the chief cabin—spoke the fatal intelligence—and by so doing, at once changed the half-stu-

pified grief of the passengers into a wild burst of frantic terror.

A dim light was burning at one end of the saloon, in which, for mere sympathy's sake, both men and women, since the commencement of the storm, had congregated together; and by its flickering rays, a scene of indescribable confusion was seen. A breathless silence of a moment, at first greeted Lord Ravenshill's terrible communication—then an expression of anguish from man, woman, and child, rose in one wild cry of terror, and all rushed to the door and staircase, crushed through their narrow openings—hurried, half mad with grief and horror, to the deck, and left Horace nearly alone in the saloon in company with a gentleman, who apparently unheeding the cause of the tumult around him, lay quiet on one of the couches at its opposite extremity. Merely did the latter fold the travelling cloak he wore more tightly about him, when he heard the announcement of the vessel's fate distinctly spoken by Lord Ravenshill, and then, with his eyes

shut, and his features composed, remained still and motionless, as if awaiting slumber rather than death. Lord Ravenshill stepped up to this passenger, steadied himself against the rolling of the vessel by leaning on his couch, and said,

“You have heard the truth, Arthur—is Richard gone? Have you the strength to rise with my assistance?”

“No,” replied Arthur Lovaine, for it was he whom Horace thus addressed. “No,” he replied in a thick, voice after a moment’s pause ; “leave me here—the vessel is sinking, is she not? I am ill, sick, dying—save yourself.”

“There is no chance of safety for either of us ; but it is as well to try for life to the last,” replied Horace, calmly, “see the doorway is already clearing—now Heaven grant me strength sufficient for both.”

And relying upon the strong muscular power he possessed, notwithstanding the continual ill health of his early days, Lord Ravenshill was about to raise the wasted form of his brother in his arms, when a

sudden lurch of the vessel made him stagger back from his side, and gave Arthur time to say in a more agitated voice than he had yet spoken.

“Do not peril your safety to ensure mine. I have no power to aid you in the endeavour—no strength to lift even this hand—the roughness of the voyage has killed me. Fly and see what chance there is on deck. Hark! is not that a cry for the boats—leave me! I must sink with the ship—I must share her fate.”

“She is sinking already,” exclaimed Horace, as, with a stunning noise a large volume of water gushed into the cabin, and flooded it up even to the very spot where he stood. “Rise—rise, Arthur—we must meet our fate together, come what may.”

“No!” rejoined Arthur, eagerly, as he felt his brother lift him with some effort from his couch, “let not our parents mourn the death of two sons in one day.”

“They will mourn but for one, and it is he who must be saved,” replied Lord Ravenshill, hastily; then he ad-

ded, as he saw the large body of water which had filled the saloon, gradually fall away through the different passages of the vessel. "Now, Heaven be praised it is only a sea that has washed over her—she has not yet met her fate."

And once more, lifting his brother in his arms, he bore him up the staircase—clinging, meanwhile, to the iron rail which still supported it—for the fearful rolling of the vessel threatened every moment to send him and his helpless burthen to the bottom of the hold.

"You but encumber yourself with a dying man," murmured Arthur, as Lord Ravenshill toiled up the stairs; "I left Lisbon but to die in my own house—leave me, Horace—they say we are near the shore—unburthened by me, you may possess a chance of safety—I—I, helpless as a child, have not even the strength to free myself from your support—leave me—for you, while there is life, there is hope."

"For both—for both," returned Horace, as he still retained his hold upon his

brother, though each moment sent the blood rushing through his heart in quick excitement, as he heard the hurried exclamations of the passengers—of the crew, and, at length, arriving on deck, beheld the wild sight of woe displayed there. Afar and near, when the forked lightning gleamed over the black sky, and illumined the whole scene for a moment or two—the billows, rearing their dark, tremendous forms over the wide bosom of the waters, were seen contrasted in the distance with a continued line of foaming breakers, that was dashing over a straggling shoal of sunken rocks towards which the ship seemed speeding to destruction, while, on the shore, a mass of rugged cliffs—the sharp points of which, in some places, jutted out irregularly into the ocean—appeared to bind in the land with a sort of impenetrable barrier against the hopes of despairing mariners. Sanguine enough must have been the man who could have hoped for life with such a scene before him. No hope, indeed, lived in the heart of any single

soul on board the fated ship, for the boats, in being loosened, had been washed over, and five or six of the men with them. Yes, the waters had already seized some part of the prey awaiting them ; had already given to death, some who had spoken, moved, breathed, clasped even the hand of the survivors but a minute since. They had been launched into eternity a few moments before their fellows, perhaps ; yet, still in time sufficient to make the latter feel even doubly the horror of their coming fate, for they had seen the anguish of the drowning men's looks as the lightning gleamed over their sinking forms—had shrunk in fear when they heard their stifled cries ring in their ears, as the dark waves closed over them, and its anticipated terrors were felt more deeply than their worst reality could be. How speaks conscience to the doomed in such moments as these, when the voice of Eternity tells it that in one short moment the freed soul will know death and life in their actual truth—when the busy scenes of a whole life crowd upon

the mind, and overwhelm it with sorrow and remorse—when the ties of love and friendship, rudely snapped asunder, bring home to the heart burning pangs, vain wishes, scalding tears! Alas! to some, by whom visions of the next world have been idly repulsed from their minds until the last moment, it speaks but to fashion forth a chaos of dread imaginings! Amidst the crowd of their fellow creatures, they feel themselves alone—alone they feel that their souls must wing their flight towards the dread unknown—the deep, dark gulph of death, for man cannot give countenance to man before God—each human being must be by himself judged, and by himself condemned. And the Eternal? how rises this image to their minds? In the semblance of a loving Father—a redeeming Saviour—a tower of strength—a haven of refuge? Not so! vague, shadowy, and undefined, the vision of the Omnipotent presses upon them—no ray of mercy illumines it—powerful in its might—strict in justice—the thought of the God whom they have

forgotten, if not defied, overwhelms them with fear, and upon the straining ship the yawning waves, they feel, even though a long forgotten prayer is on their lips, that they are lost—lost! If even he, who has striven to do well, shrinks from sudden death in fear, can they, who have done evil, meet it calmly? Yet men, accustomed to self-reliance and familiarity with danger, may, at times, restrain all outer emotion in such moments; and even now amidst the crowd of frightened wretches on the ship, there were two or three, calm in their own fortitude of mind, or in their firm trust in Heaven. Amongst these were the Captain and Lord Ravenshill, who once more stood together against the side of the vessel.

“Your brother?” said the Captain, interrogatively, as, by the aid of a sudden stream of light that shot across the sky, he observed the seemingly inanimate form of Lord Arthur, supported by Horace.

And the latter answered in the affirmative, as the heavens closed up in lurid darkness again.

“He is ill,” resumed the Captain, after a momentary pause; “he is ill,” he repeated, in a low, distinct voice. “Even if we had entered port safely, I do not think he would have weathered the voyage. Lord Ravenshill, truth must needs be told in such a moment as this—not one of us has the slightest chance of safety, though there are good swimmers, and stout hearts amongst us—but you assure yourself of a watery grave, by encumbering yourself with a half lifeless burthen.”

“Be it so,” replied Lord Ravenshill, quietly, and he turned from the Captain’s side to watch through the darkness for a last glimpse of the home of his forefathers, before which he felt that both he and his brother would die, and suddenly, as if to gratify the last yearning wish of his heart, the vast dark canopy of the heavens cracked in every part with brilliant streams of light, and opened—a vivid flash of fire once more enveloped the whole scene with its evanescent glory, and afar, in the distance, Lord Ravenshill caught sight of a

huge turretted rock, which sheltered the front of his father's mansion of Eagle's-nest. In another instant, all again was dark ; but though the actual reality of the vision passed away, its image still lived in Lord Ravenhill's brain. He thought his parents were likely to be there—for he knew Eagle's-nest to be Lord Chillingworth's favourite residence ; he could not divest himself of the idea that the supposition of his fancy was true—he actually believed in it—and he asked himself, with a momentary but uncontrollable bitterness of spirit, whether he was doomed to die as he had lived—the unloved—the unforgiven ? Was that to be the end of all his self-sacrifices—his love—hopes—endurance ? could no fitter grave than the wild ocean be found for him, who had borne so much in silence ? No fitter !—since all the voiceless yearnings of his heart for affection, would be buried for ever without a response in the dark bosom of the ocean, as they had ever been in his own.

As they had ever been in his own ? Aye !

till the light of love dawned there, and then—Frances! how that name haunted him! in the wild winds it seemed to be uttered like a sweet, soft whisper from spiritland, and her fair, pale face appeared to move before his eyes in the pitchy darkness around him. He thought of her true, faithful affection for him, and amidst all the bitterness of his present death-call, he thanked Heaven it had not sent him to the grave utterly unpitied, and unloved. Ah! love—love, indeed, at best is selfishness, for though Horace dreaded the grief which the intelligence of his death would cause Frances, still the knowledge that she would mourn for him—that one spirit, at least in thought, would wing its way over the billows, to dwell with the loved one in his ocean grave, brought, even in that hour of anguish, a strange feeling of thankfulness to his heart.

Rapidly—as rapidly as the lightning hurries on its course—passed these thoughts and feelings through the mind of Lord Ravenshill, for ten minutes had scarcely

elapsed since his arrival on deck, ere he was obliged to break off the swift current of reflection to attend to the increased danger the ship experienced from her now certain approach to destruction amongst the breakers.

She was close upon them ; and men, women, and children were huddled together round her sides, kneeling, praying, weeping, and trembling, as fear, despair, or religion held sway over their hearts. Momentarily, the bright lightning revealed their agonized countenances, and the danger which the darkness would have concealed, and each eye was eagerly bent upon the line of surge above the rocks, which they knew would decide their fate. Suddenly they discerned some lights upon the shore, saw a group of men wind down the distant cliffs with torches, and hope once more visited their hearts. They shrieked for help—for mercy, and stretched forth their hands imploringly towards the living beings they addressed.

“There is hope, Horace,” whispered

Lord Arthur to his brother at this moment, "there is help—by all you hold dear, I beseech you to leave me to myself—blind—helpless—dying—why—why strive to save me?"

But Horace, who was hastily measuring within his own mind all the disastrous chances of the ship's coming fate, did not answer, and Lord Arthur continued more eagerly,

"You feel the truth of what I say?—you must live—for my father—my mother—Horace—live—live—for my sake, live. I would have you bear my last—last words to them, and to one—who has been—is dear to me beyond death—life. There is a ring upon my right hand—take it quickly, and place it on your own—guard it well, and—and bear it to an old friend of yours—to Frances Fielding—tell her, that to the last I loved her—felt the truth of her love for me. You answer not—are you gone? One word to say you hear and understand me? The last secret—the last request of

a dying man is spoken—leave me, and fulfil it—yet, yet, before we part to meet no more in this world, tell me you have forgiven the past, my only brother?”

And the blind man, no longer supported by Lord Ravenshill, sank down upon the deck, seemed to listen vainly for a reply, and then muttered,

“He has left me—taken the ring—he will fulfil it. Annie—Frances—my last thoughts are of you! Is the ship sinking? He is gone—unreconciled to me? He has borne much—and he cannot forget—my God! heavily enough the hour of retribution presses upon me now—must I die unforgiven?”

“The ring!—the ring!” murmured the voice of Lord Ravenshill, as, for a moment, he bent over his brother, utterly unconscious of the increasing danger of the vessel. “Arthur—for Heaven’s sake—to whom am I to give it?”

“To Frances—Frances Fielding,” answered Lord Arthur, once more, with a

sudden effort, and sudden gasp of pain, "your old friend at Brompton—my father—mother—tell them—God bless you, Horace—farewell."

"Frances?" repeated Lord Ravenshill again, and with a seeming pause of the very current of life in his heart, he stood for a moment or two paralysed by the tumult of feeling his brother's words awakened within him, "this is some wild fantasy, some waking dream!"

Again he paused, again he cast one look upon the terrible scene around him—heard the yell of the tempest-shackled wind—the roar of the heavy thunder, and then, by a violent effort of self-command, recalled to himself, he wound his arm round his brother as before. And now there came louder cries for help—bitterer wailings—prayers shrieked out rather than spoken—sobs, sighs, and tears from the lips of the passengers.

"Help!" they cried, in their anguish, to the figures they discerned upon the beach;

“help us! if you would have Heaven, in like strait, ever help you!”

But without one effort to save themselves, the seamen looked on in silent despair. They knew the whole truth—they saw no boat could live in the surrounding waters, that no man could attempt to save them from a watery grave, without ensuring one for himself; and yet a shrill, loud shout was heard above the noise of the tempest from those on shore.

“Was there hope then?” they asked, “hope of life? of seeing their own homes again? of clasping father, mother, wife once more to their hearts?”

On and on heaved the ship towards the land, lit up ever and anon with the sharp, clear flashes of the lightning—over the dark billows, she strained like a thing of life, and then, amidst the crested breakers, she reeled, as it were for a moment—dashed forward—and, in the next minute, struck with her death-blow, lay shattered to pieces on the broad bosom of the waves.

One more wild shriek, a vision of floating spars, and huge pieces of the wreck, of drowning men, and foaming breakers, and the wild scene of the shipwreck was complete: the waters had their long pursued prey, the grave its toy.

CHAPTER VI.

Love, love, of mortal agony,
Thou, only thou, should'st speak !

Mrs. Hemans.

“ Ah ! my dear Annaly,” said Lady Chillingworth, on the very evening that the packet in which her sons had taken their passage home was approaching the headlands near the Marquis’s old mansion of Eagle’s-nest, “ ah ! my dear Annaly,” said she, to a young and pretty girl, who sat working by her side close to the window of a pleasant little sitting-room in the old dwelling in question “ how very boisterous the wind is ! what a terrible night for my

poor boy, if he is on the sea! I hope he has not left Lisbon. I especially desired him to avoid sailing if there were the slightest indications of rough weather."

The young lady she addressed, and who was no other than the identical Miss Childe, whom the world, as well as her ladyship, in past years, had assigned as the bride of her son, Lord Arthur, at these words, raised a pair of beautiful eyes from a piece of tapestry she held in her hand, looked at the frowning sky, and answered—

"I hope not; surely he would not do so unwise a thing—did he write to tell you that he would certainly embark for England this week?"

"No, not exactly—he only supposed he should do so—I was to have another letter from his elder brother before he made up his mind upon the subject."

"Does Lord Ravenshill accompany him then?" returned the young lady, "if so, you may be sure he will not suffer his lordship to embark in weather like this."

“Do you know my eldest son, Annaly?” anxiously rejoined Lady Chillingworth, as she heard Miss Childe’s tacit acknowledgment of Horace’s good sense.

“Oh yes!” replied Annaly, with a half smile, “intimately. When my father and I were at Vienna, we met very frequently. No one who makes Lord Ravenshill’s acquaintance can easily relinquish it—he is such a pleasant companion!”

“True,” said her ladyship, with a vexed air; and suddenly she became silent, and glanced up at her young friend in some confusion, till assuming a more careless tone, she continued—“Your opinion of my unfortunate son is a very charitable one, dear Annaly—I, I feel grateful to you for it.”

“Grateful?” returned Annaly; “why so, Lady Chillingworth?”

The Marchioness looked at her, for a moment, with a strange, scanning expression of countenance, then said, in a tone of affected commiseration—

“Why so? ah! my dear girl, had you

but seen—could you but know his brother—you would scarcely ask why I feel grateful for a word or look of kindness bestowed on poor Horace—the former is so richly endowed with nature's best gifts, the latter so poorly."

"Indeed!" answered the young heiress, half sarcastically; "now, pardon me, dear Lady Chillingworth; but of the two—I should rather say that Lord Ravenshill was the most favoured."

"Horace?" replied her ladyship in wonder.

"Lord Ravenshill," rejoined Miss Childe, "are not his abilities of the highest order? do not his profound philosophical works bear glorious evidences of a master mind on their pages, and sustain high praise as well as strict scrutiny from the *literati* of the day? Is not his conduct but the practice of what he teaches? To couple commiseration with his name would be a superfluous task—he needs it not—he only claims our admiration."

"Perhaps so," returned Lady Chilling-

worth, pettishly ; “ he lives for himself, and for himself alone—therefore, he does not see or feel his own deficiencies.”

Annaly Childe did not reply ; she felt that her ladyship the very moment after she had finished speaking those hasty words, repented having uttered them ; and she was right—she did do so, for the bitter reproaches which had been levelled at her during Horace’s childhood and youth, had taught her to veil her dislike towards him beneath an assumption of kindness and commiseration, and when she saw that she had half-revealed her real feeling to Annaly, by her peevish answer, she endeavoured to soften its acidity, and replied—

“ Yet, what have I said ? I mean not to reproach Horace in any way—his childish folly has long since been forgotten by me, and I love him as much as if he had never left me. Still I cannot help feeling irritated at those who unfavourably contrast my poor Arthur with him, and then I, unconsciously, speak strangely of the latter—

my temper is hasty—I cannot bear rivalry between brothers.”

The heiress suddenly looked up.

“Is then the very brilliant and much sought after Lord Arthur Lovaine unfavourably contrasted with his brother?” asked she.

“Too often to please a parent’s impartial ear,” answered Lady Chillingworth, with a sigh; “why you, Annaly, even you have but just now unconsciously done so—although, dearest, you have no proof to warrant your doing so, since you have not seen him, but in your early childhood.”

Annaly looked out upon the sea.

“Oh! I, I only judge according to the world’s judgment, dear Lady Chillingworth,” said she, with a forced laugh. “Both your sons are very estimable persons, no doubt, and I beg your pardon for expressing my opinion so freely upon either of them; but your own observations drew it from me.”

“They did, they did, Annaly,” returned

her ladyship; "the fact is, I wished to hear the world's opinion of my sons, and I knew you would tell me the truth."

"You must reckon me then a very unpleasant sort of person," said Annaly Childe, with a slight laugh, "a truth-teller is always thought so."

"Nay, not by those who cannot fear the truth," replied Lady Chillingworth; then she added—"If people took as much trouble to investigate reports as they take to circulate them, why then Horace and Arthur would well bear the brunt of examination."

"I dare say," replied the heiress, in as disbelieving a tone as the rules of common civility would permit her to assume.

"They would," returned her Ladyship. "Horace, you have yourself spoken highly of—and Arthur—poor Arthur—"

Here Lady Chillingworth stopped with a tone of real feeling in her voice—and a tear glittering in her eye—then, after a moment, she continued—

“He is so nearly lost to us, at present. Surely, after two years’ sufferings like his, they might leave him in peace, and not recall or animadvert upon the follies of past years.”

A half sob impeded the mother’s voice, and she turned away from her young friend with a second’s bitter grief upon her soul, for though she disliked Horace, she really loved Arthur with true warmth of heart, notwithstanding all her worldliness, and there was a deep silence in the apartment, till Annaly Childe, as if softened by her ladyship’s visible sorrow, approached the sofa where she sat, and taking her hand in hers, kissed it, as she said—

“Has he been, indeed, so ill, dear Lady Chillingworth? now, Heaven forgive me, for speaking thus lightly of one you hold so dear—but all the world told his illness was only capriciously assumed to throw off the shackles of a parliamentary life.”

“Then all the world told you wrong, Annaly,” replied Lady Chillingworth, sadly,

“he is very ill—has been so for these two years, and—and, he is now coming back to us with very little chance of recovery.”

Miss Childe looked at her ladyship with a searching look, as if doubting the truth of what she said ; then suddenly she became very pale, as she saw its actual certainty in the depth of her emotion—so pale indeed did she become, that Lady Chillingworth, as, for a moment, she chanced to look up, could not fail to remark the ashy hue of her cheeks, and started, as she hurriedly asked—

“My dear Annaly, are you ill? what is the matter?”

Annaly Childe faintly smiled, and raised her hand to her half closed eyes, as she answered—

“Ill? oh no! Lady Chillingworth. Is—is Arthur—my old play-mate—is he so seriously indisposed? Ill? it is the thunder which has given me the head-ache—how fearfully the storm rages!”

And rising from her seat, she ap-

proached a small window that faced the open sea.

The dwelling of Eagle's Nest was situated midway up a line of rugged rocks on the southern coast of Cornwall. It was a large, inconvenient, but singularly romantic-looking old place; built in the castellated style, and was in good repair, though its outward appearance, gave one the idea of its being terribly weather-beaten. It fronted the ocean, over which it had a most extensive view, and was Lord Chillingworth's most favourite residence, and his still beautiful and fastidious wife's absolute abhorrence. He loved the harsh scenery by which it was surrounded—she hated it—and maintained that there seemed no sense of refined comfort about the place; but, as it pleased the Marquis to dwell there for two or three months every year, she constantly accompanied him with what she considered the most exemplary devotion, and considerably raised herself in her own esteem by this very great sacrifice of inclination to duty. Short, however, as her stay at Eagle's Nest might be, during that

time she still felt a necessity for having a friend or two to visit her, in order to relieve the wearisome monotony of the days spent there; and, on the present occasion, she had been so fortunate as to induce Miss Childe, the young heiress, who has already been mentioned in the beginning of this tale, to grant her her company for three or four weeks. She still took a sort of interest in this young lady's proceedings, and hoped to accomplish her own and Mr. Childe's favourite project of uniting her to Lord Arthur, notwithstanding that, since his loss of rank, both father and daughter had forborne with a considerable share of worldly wisdom, as it seemed, for the space of three or four years, to visit the Chillingworth family seat, except when his lordship was safely out of the way.

"She is so amiable," said the Marchioness to herself, "so very generous—so compassionate, that if she could only see poor, dear Arthur, she could not fail to like him. He looks so extremely interesting now he is ill—so handsome—and the very name of

the malady with which he is afflicted, is a sure recommendation to every young girl's gentle fancies. Consumption! can any illness be more romantic than that!"

And her ladyship actually hoped that the fates would politely postpone the decree gone forth against the health of Lord Arthur, and allow him to accomplish the match her heart was bent upon. Poor woman! she did not know of the rapid progress his illness had lately made, or of the irretrievable misfortune he had sustained in the loss of sight—since Lord Arthur had forborne to tell her of it, in the hopes that his health and sight might become slightly better ere he met her; and it was partly with the wish of securing a brilliant establishment for him, that she invited Annaly to Eagle Nest to meet him on his return. Lord Chillingworth had done some slight service to old Mr. Childe, in the way of county business; and the latter, to show a little civility in return, desired his daughter instantly to accept Lady Chillingworth's invitation.

"She has heard," murmured Lady Chillingworth, when she at last received Annaly, beneath her roof, "she has heard a great deal of the wild doings of Arthur's early youth, and is, perhaps, prejudiced against him, as she knows she is a good prize for fortune-hunters. Ah ! well—let her judge for herself."

Her ladyship implicitly trusted to the fascinations of her beloved child, for the accomplishment of her schemes—she imagined it was with him as with the conqueror of old, "To come, to see, and to conquer." She guessed not of the bitter trials awaiting her; she felt not that her sick son lay dying upon the mere wreck of a vessel, at that moment just entering a neighbouring part of the ocean, she hoped even against hope, for his recovery, and though at times a fear of what was really the case, sent the blood from her cheeks and heart, she still persisted in deeming that the only child she had ever loved, would not be severed from her by death. Her

eldest born she disliked—her daughter was still unforgiven.

Yes, still unforgiven lived the Lady Florence, her mother knew not where ; for, though, since her elopement, Lord and Lady Chillingworth had received several penitent letters from her, asking for assistance and forgiveness, they had not answered them by word or gift, and suddenly those letters ceased to harass their sight ; and, for the last year, neither by line or report, had they heard of the Lady Florence. Lady Chillingworth would have fain forgotten her ; but she could not ; since, by the very sting of the disgrace she had brought upon the family, she was remembered. Annaly Childe, too, as the friend of Florence's childhood, for the last month had vividly recalled her to her mind ; and had given many a sharp pang to her proud and selfish heart. She would have wished her away, had not her schemes for Arthur precluded her from giving vent to any feelings, which would have shortened the latter's stay at

Eagle's Nest ; and thus, sitting oftentimes by the side of her young friend, and bitterly thinking over her long lost daughter, this woman of the world, would meanwhile, laugh and talk with all the gay frivolity, to which she was accustomed.

On the present occasion, however, she had not conversed as freely as usual, for the inquietude she experienced regarding her son's embarkment during the then boisterous weather, rendered her uneasy ; and when she was, at length, obliged to speak in his vindication, distress of mind, for the moment, overcame her hopes, and she wept truly and feelingly before the young girl she addressed.

Annaly Childe, at the moment we are speaking of, was looking towards the water, over the huge rocks that reared themselves around and beneath the small dwelling of Eagle's Nest, and against which the wild wind was forcing the waves in huge masses of foam. It was an early twilight, for the sky was dark ; the storm seemed approach-

ing the land ; the lightning was vivid—the thunder fearful—yet Annaly remained near the window for some moments, earnestly contemplating the scene before her, unheeding the terrible flashes of light, which ever and anon enveloped her form with their vivid hues, till suddenly she felt an icy cold hand laid upon her own, and turning round she beheld Lady Chillingworth standing beside her, and straining her eyes over the ocean, with an expression of absolute terror on her face.

“Dear Lady Chillingworth!” exclaimed Annaly, in an alarmed tone, as she fixed an anxious look upon her countenance, “what has happened?”

Her ladyship turned her glassy eyes towards the young girl.

“Annaly,” she said, in an interrupted, faltering tone ; “they have sailed!”

And she glanced at a letter which she held in her hand.

“Sailed!” exclaimed Miss Childe, in as earnest a tone as hers ; “Oh! no, no—do not say that!”

“They have,” replied Lady Chillingworth, in the same agitated voice. “Here is a letter from Horace to his father, which has been just brought to me. I ought to have had it sooner ; but my lord was in Derbyshire, and of course he first received it, and then sent it on to me.”

She was silent ; and Annaly, after a moment’s pause, spoke,

“They have not sailed,” she said, “they would not do so, I am sure, till these terrible gales have subsided !”

But a look of absolute despair passed over Lady Chillingworth’s countenance.

“They have,” she answered, “this stormy weather has not long set in. Horace, in his letter, says their cabins are taken. Oh ! even a slightly rough voyage would kill Arthur—he is so ill—so weak. Annaly—Annaly ! look at yonder sea—what vessel can withstand its fury ?”

And both ladies again looked towards the sea, Lady Chillingworth meanwhile gathering new anguish from noticing the renewed

fury of the storm, and Annaly in very pity trying to fill the former's heart and ear with words of comfort, to which however, she, for a time, remained deaf. But gradually she listened to her with more complacency, and tried to be more calm, yet neither of the ladies could entirely control the anxiety she felt, and during the remainder of the evening they both appeared restless and agitated. They watched the storm increase in strength, and stationed themselves at one of the windows to gaze with a sort of wild interest upon the scene before them, when the flashes of electric fluid snatched it from the coming night's darkness into momentary light. A tempest on land or sea is a magnificent sight to those who can steadily observe it, and these two ladies seemed as if they could, for though perhaps their cheeks were somewhat paler than usual, no other signs of emotion were visible in their manner. Still, therefore, they watched till the hour of midnight closely ap-

proached, and then Lady Chillingworth rose with a heavy heart to retire to rest.

“It is no use waiting here any longer,” she said, sadly, “the storm will not subside—let us bid each other good night, my dear girl. Annaly, Annaly,” exclaimed she, a moment after, “what are you looking at so earnestly?”

Miss Childe was standing near the window with her eyes still fixed upon the darkness before her; but fixed as if they were bent upon some definite object in the distance, which she had once seen, and knew must be again presented to her view, when the storm-light once more flickered over the sky.

“Wait one moment, Lady Chillingworth,” she answered, without turning her eyes from the direction in which she gazed—“one moment.”

And she laid her hand upon her Ladyship’s arm, as if to detain her; then suddenly as a vivid flash of lightning parted the tempest-clouds above her head, and faded away in the darkness again, she felt

back a step or two from the window, and said in a trembling voice,—

“It is as I thought—there is a large ship on the waters.”

Lady Chillingworth did not utter one word ; but by the light of the chandelier in the apartment, Annaly distinctly saw her Ladyship’s lips and cheeks turn white, as she drew closer to her with a convulsive movement, and waited, as her young friend had done, for the lightning to reveal the same object to her sight.

A brilliant flash came ; and the two ladies strained their eyes over the whole scene, till it was again plunged in darkness, then Lady Chillingworth once more turned towards Miss Childe—and said in a hollow tone—“Annaly, you may think me strange, you may think me foolish ; but I know, I feel that my poor boy is on yonder ship.”

And her voice broke down into a quick and violent succession of sobs, while Annaly Childe looked again in silence upon the darkness without.

“No, Lady Chillingworth,” she at length

said, after a pause of several minutes, and she tried to steady a faltering voice, “yours is an idle fear—think of the many vessels at sea on such a night as this—it may not be the one in which he is and this is not the usual track, is it?”

But the mother did not listen to the young girl's words; and in an agony of terror, she watched the approach of the ship through the heaving waters, and she talked no more of rest, though she wished Annaly to retire for the night. But this, Miss Childe, actuated by a kind pity for Lady Chillingworth's state of mind, refused to do, and through the long painful hours of coming incertitude, the latter with a strong sense of gratitude, felt she should have a companion to soothe her in her trouble. Thus they still sat gazing out upon the sea in silence.

Ere many minutes had elapsed, however, from the discovery of the vessel, they were interrupted by the entrance of one of her Ladyship's old domestics, who, approaching

his mistress, asked her whether she would allow any of her men servants to accompany a few fishermen to the beach where they were gathering in expectation of saving the lives, and perhaps some part of the wreck of a large vessel that the storm was driving towards the rocky strands of Eagle's-nest. Lady Chillingworth instantly knew the ship alluded to, could be no other than the one she and Annaly had already discovered, and she eagerly permitted as many men as were wanted to go thither at once.

Ten minutes after her ladyship had given these orders, she watched the men wind down the rocks towards the beach, saw the ship approach so near that she almost discerned she was a complete wreck, and then, as if unable to endure the agitation she felt in her present state of utter inaction, she rose hurriedly from her seat, and said,—

“ Annaly, you had better retire to rest—I am going to yonder beach—this suspense is more terrible than certainty—I must

know the name of yonder vessel—something tells me he is there.”

Miss Childe looked at her in wonder ; she could scarcely believe it was the weak and frivolous Lady Chillingworth who spoke ; for though her decision in this matter was not perhaps wise, it was still very courageous, as the tempest was every instant increasing in its fury ; “To the beach ?” she exclaimed, “it is utter madness—even yonder men can hardly stand the strength of the wind—and you, dear Lady Chillingworth, how can you do so ?”

“No matter,” replied her ladyship, hastily, “No matter—I must go. The ship will strike on the rocks—many a vessel has met her fate there before—I must go. I know a path by which my lord and I are accustomed to descend to the beach—I will go.”

“You cannot withstand the storm—indeed you cannot,” urged Annaly, as she glanced at the slight and delicate form of

Lady Chillingworth, bending and trembling with agitation even then.

“You know me not, Annaly,” returned her ladyship, sharply, “I can bear more than you imagine I can—but not this suspense. On the beach I may discern what ship she is—it was in the *Orion* he was to sail—here, I can but hope, and fear, I know not what.”

And with a peremptory gesture of silence, Lady Chillingworth left the room, followed by Miss Childe. Both ladies went to their respective apartments for a few seconds, then re-appeared; her ladyship heavily cloaked, Annaly in her usual evening dress, but with a thick shawl on her arm.

“You go alone?” asked Miss Childe, as they met once more on the staircase, “shall not one of the men servants accompany you?”

“Not a soul!” replied Lady Chillingworth, hurriedly, “or I shall be overwhelmed with words and remonstrances.”

And still followed by Annaly, she turned into a side passage that led to a little door opening upon the rocks—stepped across its threshold, and then shut and locked it again.

The wind blew with the utmost violence—the rain dashed down from the dark sky with never slackening force, and Lady Chillingworth was obliged to cling, with all her strength, to the rocks at her side, to preserve her footing as she descended the uneven and somewhat dangerous path which led towards the sea. With a shudder she sometimes looked at the darkness around her, still hurrying on, till, as she passed a sharp turning in the path she heard the voice of Annaly Childe, asking whither she went, struck her ear.

“You here! Annaly!” exclaimed Lady Chillingworth, for one moment stopping in utter surprise. “I thought I left you in the house?”

“No,” replied Miss Childe, “I passed through the outlet to the rocks at the same time you did; but I suppose I followed

you so closely, that you did not perceive me."

Lady Chillingworth uttered no reply—her own fears and thoughts overpressed her mind too much at that moment to allow her to do so ; but she waited till Annaly came up to her side, then pressed her hand warmly, and hastened on again. At length, the ladies arrived at a sheltered part of the rocks, which, though nearly on the level with the beach, nevertheless screened them from the observation of the men, who were watching for the approaching destruction of the vessel.

"Let us stay here," whispered Lady Chillingworth, "I do not wish to attract attention if I can avoid doing so."

And Annaly agreed to this proposition in the same low tone of voice, and amidst the drenching rain, and rushing wind, they eagerly gazed out again upon the sea. Wild enough was the scene before them. Thick darkness hung on the bosom of the ocean, when the lightning was not in immediate action, and the veil of night would

have been impenetrable to human eyes had not the first traces of the day, just dawning in the east, spread a faint grey light over that part of the heavens, and made the rugged line of coast, with its raging billows, and stormy sky, dimly visible. In the midst of the wild waters, helplessly straining over the waves, came the vessel which the fisherman had espied ; still, even in the half darkness of the tempest, her black hull could be seen shadowed out against the faint twilight in the distance. Presently she came within verge of the breakers, and a wild cry rose from her shattered sides ; the broad lightning flashed vividly across the heavens—the group on land saw the eager forms of her passengers and crew crowding her deck, and they answered their cries for succour by a shout of sympathy, although they knew they could render them no help. Again the storm-clouds closed over the lurid sky, darkness brooded over it, and nothing was heard, save the rushing of the waters, the howling of the tempest blast,

and the deep breathing of each man as he stood by his panting neighbour. Once more the rich light shivered over the Heavens—the ship was nearer now—she was amidst the breakers, even the expression and attitude of the terror-stricken creatures on board could be discerned.

“Lost!—lost!” cried the men, “God Almighty save them!”

“She is the Orion,” exclaimed a young fisherman, whose experienced eyes had caught sight of her figure-head.

And with a scream Lady Chillingworth clasped the rocks beside her, and sprang down towards the group on shore. Words were on her lips to pray the men whom she saw there, to succour the doomed beings before her, and amongst whom she now numbered her son. Her son? did she then only think of the loved one? aye, only of him—the beautiful!—the long-loved! Lord Ravenshill was forgotten. Countless promises were on her lips—in her heart, to purchase a saviour for him amidst the group she now approached; but she had

not the power to utter them, for every eye was strained towards the fated vessel, and the words her neighbours uttered made her strain hers in that direction too.

“Now, now, she is upon the rocks,” they cried, and they held their breath for a moment, while so fixedly was their attention directed towards the vessel, that even the sudden apparition of the two ladies in their circle did not divert it from the object of their anxiety. Up rose the ship on the bosom of a huge wave, the lightning playing fast and thick around her—

And the half uttered exclamations of the men on shore, as the breakers dashed about her, expressed her coming destruction—Up rose the wreck, and a wild scream from those on board told the spectators that the doomed ones knew their fate; the broad wave loomed forward, the lightning glimmered and faded over her shattered form, over the agonized countenances of her crew, and a long hollow peal of thunder died away in the distance. Then came a rush of

water—the crash of the parting timbers, a moment's seeming darkness, a last despairing cry, and a minute after the foaming breakers dashed over the broken remnants of the vessel, her people struggled in the midst—and the once gallant vessel was no more.

Not a scream did Miss Childe or Lady Chillingworth utter while this terrible scene was enacting ; motionless, breathless, their hearts scarcely pulsating, they stood in wordless agony till all was over ; then a deep drawn sigh broke from Annaly's lips, and without taking her eyes from the work of devastation before her, she laid her hand upon the arm of a rough, weather-beaten man near her, and said,—

“ There are men still struggling amidst the waters—for God's sake save them—or at least try to do so. Every creature's life shall be bought of you, as I would buy my own. Save them, seek them—whatever prize you name shall be yours—for I am rich—oh rich ! ah ! would to Heaven all

my wealth could buy the lives still, for a moment, spared on yonder waters."

But the man shook his head, and notwithstanding the scene before him gazed in some astonishment at what he deemed her sudden appearance on the beach.

"Human help won't avail them," he muttered sorrowfully, "God Almighty alone can do it. We've no life-boat near us for miles round—and our fishing ones are mere cockle shells. Not a soul can be saved unless the waves wash some of the crew on shore.

"Then," exclaimed Annaly, in a voice of piercing sorrow, "then all, indeed is lost!"

"Lost?" exclaimed Lady Chillingworth, suddenly rousing herself from her stupor of grief, and speaking half wildly, "who said he was lost! he can yet be saved. I did not see him amongst them—he was not there! He, my own child—my loved one, was not there! And yet—ah God! ah God!—was she not the Orion? did I not see the wreck burst—the living meet their

death? Good men, seek him—find him, and all that you can wish for shall be yours. It is a mother who speaks for her son—if you have children—think of them—think of me. See! there are some still struggling amidst the waves, and he may be one of them—hark! they cry again for help! will none, none of you answer? Ah! Heaven, how can you stand here without moving hand or foot to help the dying? God—God! let the remembrance of every moment they waste to save his life bear down upon them heavily, when their children are perishing without succour before their eyes, as mine are now!”

And half mad with grief, and utterly exhausted, Lady Chillingworth sat down upon a shattered piece of rock, and spent the rest of her words in one wild gush of tears, while the men around her, who, from the explanations of her own servants, now knew the cause of her agony, though they dared not risk their lives in obedience to her commands, still endeavoured to console her in their rough manner, with the hopes

that the waters would bear some seamen and passengers to land, ere life was extinct within them. For this contingency, they watched—for this waited, so they averred. But not such poor consolations as these could still Lady Chillingworth's grief, and still, half frantically, she continued to implore the men to listen to her prayers and promises, till one of them suddenly drew the attention of the whole party towards a young fellow, who was cautiously clambering over a narrow tongue of broken rocks that ran far out into the sea, and upon the further extremity of which two men appeared to have been thrown lifeless by the power of the waves.

"So! I thought it was Dick," exclaimed he, as he watched this bold proceeding, "if any one can save them, 'tis Dick Hutchinson; but 'tis a perilous job."

It was so; for the miniature promontory, that the young fisherman attempted to climb, was every now and then covered by the foam of the waves as they dashed past it; but amidst the shock of the tempest

he advanced towards them; when suddenly a tremendous wave rolled forwards upon the ledge on which they were, embraced it with its mighty mass of waters, broke over it in a mountain of spray, then slowly subsiding, left the rock tenantless—the men had been washed away.

A look of disappointment passed over the brave fellow's countenance, when he saw that the ocean had rescued its prey from his saving grasp; but as if determined to struggle for it to the very last, he looked around him for a moment or two, then suddenly exclaimed,

“Look to yon rising wave—there—there, it will carry them away with it—to the left, men.”

And as he now hastily accomplished the less difficult task of climbing back towards his companions in the same direction as that in which the nascent wave was slowly swelling—the latter hurried towards the spot he pointed out. On came the liquid mountain, rearing its dark form with the strength of a thousand giants against the lurid lead-coloured

sky, over which the dawn was now breaking more boldly ; it had already passed the rocky shallows that partially intercepted the advance of the waters upon the beach, and onwards rolled undeviatingly, till suddenly its crest rapidly whitened and increased, then gushing over with the noise of many trumpets, and a tremendous swell, it swept up to the very feet of the land group. Eager, searching eyes were bent upon its retreating waters ; Young Hutchinson sprang down from the rocky ledge on which he stood, and sending an eagle glance over the whole scene, with half a dozen men ran forward, seized some dark object about to be carried back to the furious sea, and dragged it to the shore.

It proved to be two men fast locked in each other's grasp, or more properly speaking, the form of the one seemed to have been supported in the arms of the other, against the violence of the storm, and utterly unconscious or dead; the grasp with which the stronger man held his companion, was as rigid as the embrace of

death. The face of the latter rested on the bosom of his supporter, as the rescuers rested their burden for some seconds on the beach to take breath, and during that time Lady Chillingworth, who had been watching the whole scene with undescribable anxiety, hastened forward, pressed past them, and knelt down to see whether either of the lifeless men they had saved from the waves was indeed the son she loved. In the grey twilight of the morn, the harsh, plain features of her eldest born met her view—with a start of terror—a look of pain, she gazed upon the damp and livid countenance, and her hand dropped upon it, as she muttered,

“One, one is here,” then added, in a choked voice, as she glanced with a look of entreaty towards the concealed face of his companion ; “the other—the other—show me the other—and no delay !”

With a look of commiseration, one of her own servants bent down, and aided the fishermen in unclasping the still supporting arm of Lord Ravenshill from around

the form it encircled, and raised the latter, for one moment, from the ground. In that time, Lady Chillingworth caught sight of the fair pale features she so wished to see, and, with a half-stifled scream, clasped the lifeless form of Arthur Lovaine to her heart, pillowed his head on her bosom, and covered him with her kisses and her tears. Lord Ravenshill, the saviour of the being she loved, whose love for herself, for him was so pure, so true, lay on the beach forgotten and unaided, save by the strangers around him. Meanwhile, Annaly Childe stood by her side, like some beautiful piece of painted sculpture, so rigidly motionless was her attitude during the space of several seconds; the tempest was still raging—the rain still pouring down in torrents, yet with her bonnet entirely pushed off her head in the eagerness of her anxiety, she stood, utterly heedless of the elements' violence, gazing vacantly down upon the bodies of the two brothers, till, as her eye glanced, for one moment more, steadily upon that of Horace, she seemed thoroughly

to comprehend the whole scene—perhaps, even the latter's self-devotion, and murmured—

“Will the sin of the mother be visited upon the son? will she lose the loved—will Heaven spare the hated?”

Wildly Lady Chillingworth looked up; she had overheard Annaly's words; she had understood their meaning, and eagerly she laid her hand upon her arm.

“Do you, too, speak that which my own heart has whispered?” said she; “on the lips of the stranger, on the face of the dead must that truth be told?”

And Lady Chillingworth, with a terrified, self-reproachful look, turned towards Lord Ravenshill—yet turned but one moment, for his harsh features seemed drawn into an expression of deep sternness, now that the light of the dark, grey eye no longer shone over them, and the mother, in very fear, shrank back again from their sight. It appeared to her as if the dark, bitter look upon his countenance forbade the mockery of a love, which had been de-

nied to the living heart of the sufferer, and was even now granted but in an hour of remorse and peril—perhaps, to the dead. Love! it was no love that made the Marchioness look once more upon her neglected son; it was only the fear of her having brought a judgment down upon the head of the loved one, through her dislike towards Horace—a judgment which she would now have striven by kinder conduct to avert; but the harsh expression of the senseless man's features repressed any such demonstration, on her part—a strange thought came to her, that his freed spirit might, perhaps, even, at that moment, know the selfish worthlessness of her remorse, and she shrank back from Horace's side without one word of affection towards him, and knelt down and wept again by Arthur's.

And Annaly knelt there for some moments, too; with a look of anguish upon her pale, pure features, she bent forward and gazed into the face of Lord Arthur, seeking for a sign of life in its passionless

expression; but on its calm outlines there was not one; and with a deeper look of pain, she half unconsciously exclaimed.

“Is he dead?”

“Dead!” echoed Lady Chillingworth, as she parted the long, fair hair of her son from the wet, livid temples, and passionately pressed her cold cheek against his colder one. “Dead! no—no! Who spoke of death?—he will yet revive!”

But Annaly’s eyes met those of an old man who was, at that moment, turning towards his companions with a sorrowful, despairing shake of his head, as he glanced towards the brothers, and addressing the men near her, said,

“Your master’s sons must be conveyed to the house—a few of you will accompany us thither; but let all the rest stay here to try to rescue the other human beings from the wreck. These are Lady Chillingworth’s orders I am sure.

And urging the necessity of complying with her wishes upon Lady Chillingworth, the latter, who was not devoid of sense

although she, was at times, an unreasonable woman, at once endeavoured to rise and aid her servants in bearing Lord Ravenshill and Arthur to the house. Hope soothed her vain grief for the moment, and walking by the side of her younger son, she proceeded with them in that direction. She had no eyes, no heart, save for him—her thoughts and love were exclusively his, and Horace was forgotten and slighted even in death, as he had been in life.

CHAPTER VII.

Have I not had to wrestle with my lot ?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven ?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven ?

Lord Byron.

MORNING broke clearly over the heavens ; the storm had done its work and had subsided ; the elements were at peace, and the scene of the late terrible disaster was only indicated by various portions of the wreck being washed on shore. But these suggested melancholy thoughts enough, and rendered the sparkling waters, smiling as they seemed on that day, beneath a glorious

sunrise, a sad sight for those who had witnessed the last night's catastrophe, as they passed on to their daily employments—for only three men, besides Lord Chillingworth's sons had been saved—every other soul on board had perished. Even the lives of the survivors were despaired of for some time—for being washed upon the shore after their strength and senses had been well nigh vanquished by the violence of the waves, the state of insensibility into which they had fallen could not be soon overcome, and many an hour of bitter suspense, in particular, did Lady Chillingworth pass, ere she received the announcement of her sons' partial recovery; but at length she was informed that life beat feebly in their hearts, with a stronger pulse, however, in Lord Ravenshill's than in Lord Arthur's. In bitter grief did Lady Chillingworth hear the latter intelligence, and in her secret thoughts she almost wished that Heaven might yet spare her fairest child, and take the unloved one for its victim. She knew

not, guessed not the self-devotion of Horace for the being she almost adored, and as yet she felt no latent affection for him—he would live, they said, and with this assertion of his safety from the lips of his medical attendants she dismissed all anxiety respecting him from her mind, and turned from his couch as of old to watch by that of his brother.

The day, the wearisome, anxious day wore on, and passing like a restless spirit from room to room, as remedy after remedy was applied to her sons, Lady Chillingworth, at length, in one of the rooms encountered Annaly Childe. The deadly paleness of the young girl's complexion forcibly struck her Ladyship—even in the midst of her own grief—with surprise, and as she glanced at her she saw that she suffered much from the terrors and fatigues of the preceding night, and kindly, even in the midst of her own grief, she tried to speak cheerfully; but in less than a moment her

forced calmness gave way, and before the young girl she gave free vent to her bitter sorrow.

No doubt the true courage, the ready sympathy which Annaly displayed in following her to the beach, had filled Lady Chillingworth with true affection towards her ; and without any other motive than a wish for her company to soothe her in the deep affliction she at present endured, she now begged her to stay with her for two or three days longer than she intended to do. Perhaps though her name never passed her lips she thought of her child Florence at that moment, and wished to retain the daughter-like sympathy of Annaly near her, so that the void she would have otherwise experienced from the loss of the former, might not be heavily felt in her proud and selfish heart. Annaly, however, notwithstanding all her Ladyship's entreaties could only consent to lengthen her visit at Eagle's-Nest for one day more ; with a pallid cheek and faltering voice she

showed her a letter she had that morning received from her father, desiring her immediate presence in town, and Lady Chillingworth was obliged to acquiesce in the necessity for her instantly obeying it. Gently, nevertheless, and kindly did she endeavour in the present hour to administer every thought and feeling of comfort to the agonized mind of Lady Chillingworth; but it was a fruitless task. Her Ladyship, impatient as she had ever been under the most trivial misfortunes, was half frantic under the severe one she at present experienced, and neither hope, nor fear could still her bitter bewailings, till the medical man who was in attendance on the brothers, entered the room where she and Annaly sat, and announced Lord Ravenshill's return to a full consciousness of life.

Her Ladyship hurriedly dried her tears at this intelligence, coloured deeply, rose hurriedly, and immediately followed him to her son's apartment. Horace looked up eagerly as she entered his room, and Lady

Chillingworth, met his look, rapidly advanced towards him, and with a seemingly affectionate greeting, embraced him. It is a most bitter thing to have a very quick perception, to be able upon the moment thoroughly to value people's words, and feelings at their true worth—particularly when the possessor of such a power believes himself to be a person not easily liked. Now Horace had this faculty in an eminent degree, and in his present meeting with his mother, affectionate as she had endeavoured to make it appear, he discerned her usual want of love for him, and with a keen glance at her agitated countenance, he spoke suddenly and kindly of his brother.

“He is still unconscious,” he said, “he is very weak; but thank Heaven he yet lives—”

Lady Chillingworth turned aside from Horace's piercing look; if he had been a son whom she had loved as dearly as Arthur, she would at once have spoken of her grief and of her hopes respecting his bro-

ther ; but as it was the same still small voice which had answered Annaly's accusing words upon the beach, now whispered that punishment had been awarded only where it was due ; and she felt she could not give free vent to her affection or her tears for Arthur before him she had disliked, and for whom her tears had never fallen even in the hour of his deepest danger. Motionless, then, Lady Chillingworth stood by the side of Lord Ravenshill her heart well nigh bursting with pent up grief ; but her lips wordless. Horace saw the struggle within her, and with a wish to ease the pain she thus silently suffered, he took her hand within his, and said—

“ Mother, he will live !”

He thought of his own strenuous endeavours to save Arthur from a watery grave, and he trusted in Heaven's mercy that he had not so worked in vain.

Lady Chillingworth looked at Horace for a moment with an expression of deep pain upon her face, for he had spoken in

the trembling tones of his boyhood, and scenes of that long past time of her own harshness towards him came back to her memory. She thought he was thinking of them; she felt that he had perceived her agony regarding Arthur's fate, her comparative indifference about his, and she almost believed the words he had spoken, had been uttered mockingly. The dark look of his fixed features as she had approached him when lying unconscious upon the beach passed before her eyes—ah! she knew not it was the agony of jealousy which had placed that harsh expression there, when the strength of mortality had given way before the might of the waters, and thought, released from strife with death, as the senses gradually failed, had centred its dying power upon the deep wound his heart had received but a moment before—upon the infidelity of Frances the long loved one, Frances the unforgotten. She knew not this, and hardened by fear and shame, she again turned from the son whose very patience beneath her dislike

had seemingly brought this judgment upon her, and in answer to his earnest, thrilling words of "He will live," she murmured, faintly—

"I am punished—he will die!"

In another moment her tears flowed fast and thick over her pallid cheeks, and she quitted the room, leaving Horace once more heart-sick from the repulse of his sympathy.

An hour afterwards, Lady Chillingworth was called to the side of her younger son to greet his return to consciousness, and full of her new hopes she did not again think of Horace. Lord Arthur, however, though sensible of what was passing around him, seemed too exhausted, from the fatigues of the previous night, to utter a single word in answer to her various enquiries, and for many hours, through actual weakness, lay as quiet as a corpse save for his light breathing which every now and then told the listeners he was alive. Lady Chillingworth watched beside him throughout the night; not for one moment did her eye-

lids droop over her weary eyes as she sat by him, and only once did she leave her post to enquire more from duty than affection after her other son.

The morning, however, dawned under better auspices; Lord Arthur had slept well, and perhaps by that means, exhausted nature had gained back some of her strength, for the doctor pronounced him considerably amended, although he was still too feeble to speak. Horace also though ill and sorely bruised from the buffeting of the waves against the rocks, was much better, and late in the afternoon he felt able to rise, and to proceed to his brother's room.

Lady Chillingworth was there, and she looked surprised at his entrance ; but not so the sick man, who, as he heard his mother pronounce his brother's name, feebly raised himself on his couch, and bent his countenance in the direction from whence he heard the sound of his entering footstep. Horace advanced, and when his hand was within Arthur's, gazed down upon him with an earnest look for the space of a minute;

then an expression of bitter sadness passed over his features, and in the same moment he half unconsciously drew his hand hastily away. This action was noticed by Lady Chillingworth, and interpreted by her into evincing Horace's strongly rooted dislike towards his brother. Eagerly, yet involuntarily as the thought passed through her mind, she drew the window curtain back to see how the latter would greet it, for as yet she did not know of his loss of sight, because the room had been purposely darkened by Lord Ravenshill's desire, so that her grief for him might not be rendered too acute by a sudden knowledge of this additional misfortune. Now, however, she glanced towards her son, with the light falling full upon him—met the strange look of the sightless eyes, and started back in terror; a half uttered exclamation died upon her lips, and she fixed an enquiring glance upon Horace. Lord Ravenshill guessed the cause of his mother's emotion, and with a wish to prevent her giving way to any violent agitation in the

presence of his brother, who he knew was too weak to bear anything of the kind, he stepped forward, and with a gesture expressive of silence and caution, briefly, yet gently, explained the matter to her. Lady Chillingworth listened in silence; but every moment her cheek grew whiter and whiter, till clasping her hands over her face, in bitter grief, in mute despair, she sat down by Arthur's side. She had understood Lord Ravenshill's gesture; she felt she must not express the agony writhing in her heart by words or passionate exclamations of feeling, lest she should too seriously affect the heart and mind of the sufferer, and thus though she felt this intelligence to be the severest blow she had yet received, she wept on in speechless sorrow. All her dreams, her hopes respecting the son whom she had loved, as she had loved no other human creature, lay shattered before his couch of pain and affliction; in the prime of his manhood, she saw him stricken down a helpless, sightless being—had all the love she had ever lavished on

him lived but to witness this? aye, only to witness this! the nothingness of earthly hopes, of earthly dreams!

She looked up ; with swimming eyes, and heaving bosom, she turned towards Arthur, and she saw Horace bending down by the bedside, to catch some words that the sick man seemed about to speak, and with a hope of his returning more fully to consciousness she bent forward and listened too. But she heard no words that she could thoroughly comprehend ; her own name he once repeated—Horace's, a few unintelligible ones, and then he appeared too exhausted to utter more. The sick man had attempted to explain his brother's self-devotion to the mother whom he knew watched at his side ; but he had not found the strength to do so, and another evening passed away, and Horace remained yet unknown as the preserver of him who had for so long a time usurped his place in his parents' hearts. In his parents? yes, and in the heart of one whom he once deemed no power on earth could estrange from his

no circumstances prove untrue. The words which Arthur had spoken at the moment of the vessel's destruction, still rung in his ears clearly and distinctly; the ring he had given him was yet on his finger, and it was a well remembered cameo, he had often seen Frances wear. After the first moments of his recovery, the whole scene came back to his memory as vividly recollected as it had been felt, and with a deeper pang of anguish than his heart amidst all its trials had until then experienced, he became convinced that Frances, the long-tried, long loved, was at length as false to him as the rest of his friends and kindred had been, that she had withdrawn her love, and bestowed it on the last, last person she should have bestowed it upon—upon his brother.

“And how? and when?” he exclaimed, as he thought of past days, till he remembered that for three years he had not heard from her, and therefore there had been time enough for her to change, if so inclined. He recollected his first meeting with his bro-

ther, at the theatre, and remembered that the latter had admired her even then. But Arthur—had he usurped his place wittingly? It seemed not so—for he had not spoken of their mutual love as a thing to blame, when he implored Horace to be the bearer of his last message to her, in case he should not survive the loss of the ship, and, “perhaps,” murmured Lord Ravenshill, even amidst the heart pangs crowding upon him, “perhaps, he does not know of my love for Frances, since, at the time, of the declaration of my engagement with her, he was not residing with us.” His mother, he thought, might not have mentioned the circumstance to Arthur, through fear of rendering him hopeless of succeeding even at a distance to the title and estates he had so long considered his own, and his father, he knew, was too reserved to mention a subject which appeared disagreeable to himself, to a son, in whose proceedings he now took but little interest. Arthur then, he imagined, while addressing Frances, might have been ignorant of his

affection for her, for he almost felt assured that no man upon the point of death would have spoken to a rival he had willingly supplanted as Arthur did. And the bitterly angry feelings which the announcement of the truth had aroused within Horace against his brother, were, by the force of his reason, partially tamed down.

It was with this death-wound to all his hopes of happiness in his heart, that he tried to bear his brother through the wild waves on the night of the shipwreck ; when struggling amidst the waters, still those last words rung in his ears, and bade him remember he was carrying his rival in his arms to life and safety. Their bitter memory even clung to him during the last moments of strength and consciousness, eagerly revisited him when his senses returned, and now, now, as he stood beside his sick brother's couch, and saw him more helpless than the weakest child, still it was ever present to his mind, still, in the anguish it caused him, it almost bade him rouse the latter to explain them more fully,

almost sent him from the room in bitter hatred, bitter jealousy.

But if his thoughts were too rebellious to restrain within the bounds of charity, his actions, at least, were controlled by the behests of reason, and he was scrupulously kind in word and deed towards Arthur. Gradually, also, the perfect helplessness of the latter, and the strong claim which he saw death had on him, won Horace to compassion—pity—even tenderness. When his heart was rousing itself to anger, or his mind giving way to impatience and despair, he sought Lord Arthur's side, watched over him as diligently as his mother, and, perhaps, more efficiently, yet did not utter one word upon the subject which was torturing his heart, to break the sick man's rest. He kept the fiend of jealousy close shut up within his own bosom, though it burned the deeper there, and was felt the more. Back to his heart, at those times, came that sense of utter loneliness which had oppressed his childhood and his youth. True, he had gained the world-fame he

had striven for—but what are the brightest meeds of fame to one word of love, felt by a heart sickening for sympathy? he was still alone—alone in heart, and mind. The love of many years had been cast back into his own bosom to live a tortured life—for well he knew it could not die—and again he felt himself despised and rejected. For whom! ah, Heaven! for whom? for the brother who had caused him to suffer so much and so deeply! He looked down upon the scarcely breathing form of Arthur; on the pale features, which, though worn and wasted, still retained beauty's fairest gifts—within his mind, he contrasted them with his own ungraceful ones—and, God of Life! even in Horace's good, pure heart, a strange, strange feeling of relief, for one moment, arose, when he thought that death might yet prevent the dreaded union of two beings, whom nothing else, he thought, in this world could sever. Earth! earth! such wishes, telling of our soul's imperfection, come from thee! A moment, he thus felt, then with a deep horror at his own

thoughts, again he looked towards Arthur, and, at that moment, on the fair, pale features, which the mother idolized, the young girl worshipped, dwelt a smile so placid, and so pure, that its tranquil beauty called him back to the earliest days of his infancy, when even the child's jealousy had not been sufficiently aroused to make his brother's name other than a name of love to him—it was the smile of Arthur's boyhood. Rarely, but yet vividly the long lost expression of the child's happy smile, at times, comes back to the worn and haggard countenance of the man, and, for a moment, obliterates all traces of a life's career of care and sorrow. Such a look, however evanescent in its power over the features, has, ere now, made many a heart bleed with tenderness, even in the midst of anger, and staid the utterance of many an unkind word. On the brow of Lord Arthur a similar smile now dwelt, and as Horace Lovaine gazed down upon it, the wild jealousy within his heart, was gradually stilled. The bitter heart-ache which

he had been enduring until then, was hushed, as it carried him back to their earlier days ; each childish caress, each good-natured word that Arthur had ever uttered, was remembered, as he sat there, and watched him in the dim twilight of eve, calmly sleeping. Years of bitter strife had separated them, and now, though in the hour of reconciliation, he had had his death blow given by the hand which had been held out in peace towards him, still he felt that he could not turn away from him in wrath—and his reproaches centred themselves upon her, who had only taught his heart to hope for happiness, in order to make it feel its void more deeply.

The last shadows of evening closed in ; and Arthur, by whose side none at that moment watched, save Horace, awoke and spoke to the latter in a low but distinct voice. A few questions he asked about his mother, his father, and himself, and then, as if the subject he was about to speak of, had banished all other considerations from his

mind, he turned towards Lord Ravenshill, and with an eager effort said—

“I have to thank you for life—for all your kindness, Horace. I have been perfectly sensible all this while, although too weak to move or speak—but tell me of our escape, that I may know the full extent of my obligations towards you. “No,” he added, as he imagined Lord Ravenshill about to utter some words, “No, you will not fatigue me by the recital—I am strong now.”

And Horace gave him a slight sketch of their perils and deliverance.

“My mother on the beach—in that storm!” repeated Arthur after him, “Miss Childe, too! and you, you Horace, do you not feel any ill effects from your past exertions for me, for yourself?”

“No,” returned Horace, constrainedly, as he thought of Frances. “No, the fatigue has worn off.”

The sick man listened to the voice of his brother, with an earnest anxiety of mien,

which gradually wore down into a look of disappointment, when he noticed the cold calm tone in which he spoke.

“Horace,” he said, with a sigh, “I do not ask your forgiveness for the past—I know you have forgiven me—else you would not have tended me at Lisbon—saved my life in the wreck—been here at my side, watching as you are now. But that, that does not suffice for me—I know all ties between us I rudely snapped asunder—that I do not deserve your affection—and yet, Horace, brother, my very heart yearns for it now.”

Lord Ravenshill gave no answer to this appeal, with his face buried in his hands, he sat listening to it, breathing deeply and hurriedly. Does he, can he know of my past love for Frances?” he thought, “dare he thus speak to me if he did?”

Arthur Lovaine raised himself upon the pillows on which he leaned, and bent forward as if to listen to the slightest word his brother might utter ; but he heard not one, and once more continuing to speak in

an agitated tone—"I do not thank you for the mere boon of life," he said, "that is of little worth to me at present. I thank you only for your past forbearance, past charity towards me. Horace, I have long since rightly interpreted your childhood, and your youth—and know the bitter life you must have led in consequence of our parents' dislike, and misconception of your character. Well, I shall soon die—and then, then they will read it more truly—God forgive them, forgive me for not having done so before!"

And his voice seemed to falter from exhaustion and pain, and after a moment's pause Horace forced himself to answer.

"There have been misunderstandings on both sides," he said in a tone of forced calmness, for he had nerved himself against speaking rashly, lest he should betray the secret of his heart, "let all be forgotten." Then he added as he thought of his parents' love for the child they had well nigh lost, "but do not talk of dying—."

"Why not?" interrupted Arthur, with a bitter smile, and he felt to the heart's core

the quiet tone in which his brother spoke, "what have I to live for?"

"Our father—mother," murmured Horace's lips, while his heart alone whispered "Frances."

A flush passed over the sick man's cheek.

"My father," he said "has long since rated me as low as I deserve to be rated—my mother made me what I once was."

There was a few moments of silence, and then Horace, with a beating heart, and agitated voice said—

"And she whom you mentioned to me at the moment of shipwreck—whose ring I have—is she not worth living for?"

Arthur Lovaine started, "Worth living for?" he exclaimed, "aye! she is a priceless jewel. Where is the ring, Horace? Give it to me until I die—then take it to her, and say, that I would have been what she wished me to be, had I not been stricken to death as I have been—but give it to me now!"

And without a word Lord Ravenshill

drew the ring off his finger and placed it in Arthur's hand.

"You will do this?" continued the latter, more eagerly, "you will carry this to her—tell her all."

"To Frances Fielding?" asked Lord Ravenshill, in a voice of choked emotion.

"Did I not say so?" returned his brother, "you know her well, she spoke to me of you—told me that she knew your history—and urged me even then to love you—do you justice."

Horace started up from the side of his brother, his brain was whirling—his pulse fainting beneath the impressions, his words awaked within him. She, the deceiver, he thought, she, in the midst of her perfidy to speak of him, to urge his brother to love him! his every sense of feeling seemed seared beneath the proofs of her duplicity which, without his comprehension were forcing themselves upon his mind. "No more," he was about to utter—"no more, for the love of Heaven"—when suddenly the

thought struck him in the midst of his madness that there might possibly be some mistake in the person designated as Frances, and once more steadying his voice he asked,—

“Arthur, are you speaking of Frances Fielding—the child who relieved me in the streets—the sister of my nearest friend?”

“Of Henry Fielding of Lincoln’s Inn? yes—no other Frances has ever been present to my heart,” answered he.

Horace sank back against the wall near which he stood, a cold damp gathered thickly on his brow, and the pulse of life almost ceased beating for some minutes.

“Now, God, forgive her,” he murmured, half aloud, in extreme anguish, “she has withered my heart to its innermost core!” Then came the yearning wish of knowing more—of utterly sifting her faithlessness to its very dregs, and with a wild impatience, that even the knowledge of his brother’s weak state could not restrain; he asked eagerly, how the intimacy had commenced. But the dew of exhaustion was

on the blind man's forehead, and the effort required to answer Horace's question appeared too much for his strength.

"Another time," he murmured, "another time I will tell you all, Horace—I cannot now."

And again Lord Ravenshill kept a silent watch of agony by his brother's sick couch.

CHAPTER VIII.

I dream no more—the vision flies away,—

* * * * *

There fell my hopes—I lost my all in this,

My cherish'd all of visionary bliss.

Now hope farewell—farewell all joys below,

Now welcome sorrow, and now welcome woe !

* * * * *

God of the just ! thou gav'st the bitter cup !

I bow to thy behest, and drink it up !

Kirk White.

It was near upon the midnight of the same evening in which this interview passed between the brothers, when Lady Chillingworth first saw her younger son able to converse with her, since the disastrous catastrophe of the shipwreck. Entering

his room, after he had passed several hours in a state of unbroken rest, she was delighted and surprised to see him capable of this exertion, and heart-felt were her self-congratulations upon the subject. At the moment that she was stepping into the room, Lord Ravenshill, who had, until then, remained with his brother, was passing out from it, and her ladyship, happening to look towards him as he met her half way, perceived an almost livid air of grief upon his countenance, which made her, for a moment, pause, and say,

“I did not know your brother was here—how long has he been with you, Arthur?”

“For a couple of hours,” he replied.

“And, during that time, have you been thus able to speak? why did he not send to tell me of it?”

Arthur explained that he had only been capable of conversing with his brother for a very short time.

“Nevertheless, he might have called me to you,” returned Lady Chillingworth, impatiently, “even an hour’s delay is much

when such good news has to be told—but his thoughtlessness in this matter is just like the rest of his proceedings.”

“In what, mother?” hastily interrupted Arthur.

“In what?” repeated her ladyship, after a moment’s hesitation, for accustomed as she was to give vent to her pettish feelings towards Horace before Arthur, without any show of displeasure on the latter’s part, she could not now comprehend a look of pain that contracted his features as she uttered her last words, and she paused, almost in surprise, to witness it. “In what?” she repeated. “In his usual disregard of people’s feelings, Arthur—in his self-centred affection. He should instantly have informed me of your accession of strength. I cannot imagine any one so unfeeling as not to have done so.”

Arthur Lovaine spoke hurriedly and with emotion.

“Has he not told you of our shipwreck?” he said, “of our danger—my helplessness!

his self-devotion? Mother, mother, I guess he has not, else you could not speak of him as you do. How came we to the shore Separate or linked together?"

The whole scene upon the beach, as her son uttered the last words flashed vividly before the eyes of Lady Chillingworth; she recollected that the slight form of Arthur, from its position within the arms of Horace, must have been supported by him; the accusing words of Annaly Childe again rang in her ears—the sudden thought that she owed to Lord Ravenshill the life of the son she loved dawned in her mind; and with a sudden palpitation of heart, and a strange, quick flush upon her cheek, she answered,

“Together—together!”

“Yes—yes; together,” repeated Arthur, “but only thus linked together by the strength of his love; for, at the moment of shipwreck, I was lifeless—a dead weight—without strength—and I must have sunk with the vessel had he not been near. As

it was, he wasted his life to preserve mine—threw it almost away. It was through his exertions that we gained the rocks on which we were first stranded in the hour of our deepest danger, when I entreated him to leave me to my fate, so that you might not be bereaved of us both—he would not! He said that even were we both to die, you would mourn but for one of us—he said so—and he spoke truth—mother, dearest mother—which would have been mourned—the worthless or the deserving?”

“Arthur! he said that—he saved your life?”

“Even so! he was near me—ever near me—we have wronged him much.”

“Wronged him?” muttered Lady Chillingworth, with a pallid cheek, and a throbbing heart, “how, Arthur?”

“Does not memory tell you how?” returned her son, with more emotion. “Have so many days passed since the shipwreck, and you do not yet know his worth, or be-

lieve in his goodness ? Hear then the truth from my lips—you will not hear it from his—hear it, dearest mother, and though it may seem harsh to you, forgive my utterance of it—it is for the sake of one whom we have both misjudged, that I speak it—and mother, dear, I may chance to speak it with the lips of the dying.”

“ The dying ! oh, no—no ! ” echoed Lady Chillingworth, as she bent forward, and threw her arms round her son’s neck ; “ no—no ! Arthur ! my beloved one ! that which the sea has rendered back, the earth shall not claim—death is not near you now ! ”

“ Nearer—nearer than you think,” replied Arthur, in a low, yet unfaltering voice. “ Deem me not cruel in thus speaking mother—thoughts of you alone make me mention life’s coming end. When I am gone—nay, mother, do not weep, I may not die ; but, only if I should, say, would it be well *then* to turn to him, whom you have not loved, for sympathy and aid—to strive then to read the good, true heart, which I, at

length, have rightly read ? Love rejected—wounded hopes are within it—so wounded by past dislike and scorn—that when I—not long since—asked for the affection I once cast aside, it shrunk back from my prayer—not in anger—not in hatred—no; it was only too slighted by past witherings to gain new life from the tardy balm I offered it. Mother, let not that heart so shrink from you ! I have suffered—I yet suffer from the coldness which I, nevertheless, deserve.”

“ He has rejected your love, my own Arthur—he has added a pang to your present sufferings ! From him I want no sympathy or aid ! He saved you but to make you feel his own goodness ! yet, not—not in the way you imagine. He spoke kindly—but, when the feelings of the heart are thoroughly aroused, the ear tries tones and words, and I saw, through all his kindness, that he had no actual love for me ! It was ever thus—he has no heart—Arthur, Arthur, you wish me to love him.

I thank him for your life—and that is all I can do.”

An air of deeper pain spread over the countenance of Lord Arthur, and he paused for a moment or two ere he answered ; then he said,

“That is but a small boon to thank him for—thank him, mother, for the silence with which he has borne his boyish sorrows, his manhood’s grief—for the fortitude with which he has lived down the reproach cast on you through your carelessness of him in his earlier years. They speak not of you now as once they did—more generally they blame him—and the sacredness of a mother’s love, though its semblance be false towards him, again hallows your name. You do not speak—mother, are you still near me ? Can you pardon what I have said ?—what I still must say ? In the hour of his boyish flight the chief fault was on your side if he did wrong ; he ought to have been excused, for he was then but a mere child—and if, in subsequent years, he kept the secret of his existence from you, it was

not with the intention of afterwards claiming back the rank he had forsaken, as I, you—even my father imagined he did. “His heart is not a heart of malice—it forgives—it has forgiven, even if it cannot forget. The clear, soft tones of his voice—the sad, patient glance of his eyes, often, even in past times, urged my heart to waver in its suspicions of his integrity, and now they reveal a full world of love and trouble to me. He does not speak of sorrow’s bitterness—never of love’s endurance; and yet, he has experienced both. Must he not have endured, and sorrowed, in past years?—must he not endure and sorrow even now? If, when a child, his love repulsed bade him fly from the home he should have loved, could his heart be unpained?—no, no; the life he afterwards preferred, even to the splendours which were his due, tells how deeply it was wounded. The cold stones of the streets—the charity of strangers, he felt less oppressive than the shelter of that home—where mother—dearest mother, your affec-

tion was wanting to him—the deformed child despised. And then, when love forced him to acknowledge himself, when he confessed the fault he had committed—mother, did you stretch forth forgiveness to the returning one? I—I reviled him—turned from him—oh! God forgive me the words then spoken!”

“Arthur,” exclaimed Lady Chillingworth, sobbing heavily, as she remembered her eldest son’s cruelly repulsed appeal to her feelings on the night of his return to his family; “no, no, he did not—could not feel the past as you say he did—he cared not for one of us, else he would not have so long remained severed from us.”

“He did—he did,” replied Arthur, “mother—kind mother as you have been to me—I would that you had loved him more—I would that you had loved me less.”

Lady Chillingworth bowed her head on her clasped hands; a flush of shame and of remorse passed over her countenance, and she turned away from her son, as if

his sightless orbs could see her trouble and confusion.

“And you, Arthur,” she only murmured, “you to tell me this!”

Her son raised himself with effort, bent towards her, and pressed her hand, which he still held within his, to his lips.

“If he had died the other night beneath these rocks, your own heart would have more harshly told you of it,” he said, “you would have wept far bitterer tears than you are weeping now.”

She was utterly silent—she listened passively.

“Every word and look of pain at your indifference, which he had spoken, or evinced as the child, or as the man, would, by you, have been remembered—every little unkindness ; and thought, and feeling, would alike have arisen. Yearning for the forgiveness—the love, which would then have been sealed up for ever in the grave, bitter whispers, and self-reproaches must have lacerated your heart. Mother, in very pity, we should have been more

compassionate towards a being apparently so devoid of nature's most coveted gifts—but we were not. Our punishment has come home to us. The scorned one has risen to be good, and wise, and great—the loved one—ah! mother, where lies he? with shattered hopes, and wasting life on the death-bed of a too late repentance!”

“My God—no!—the love of Heaven prevent it! watching every breath upon your lips—every flush upon your cheek, Arthur, I have sat by your pillow day and night, and you, in bitter cruelty, wake, at length, to tell me this!”

And again the arms of the mother were wound around her son, and passionately she wept, while he, scarcely heeding her caresses, still continued to speak.

“In cruelty! say not so; love like yours for me must ever meet with love—but my heart bleeds for Horace. Mother, I should not be thus clasped in your arms, or feel your tears and caresses had he not been my saviour from yonder waves. Blind and helpless, I was a mere burden to him—yet

he never forsook me—speechless, but not senseless, I heard one of the crew urge him to leave me to my fate, since there was no chance of safety for him or me if I went with him—yet, yet, he saved me—the brother for whom he suffers! Mother, he has been pained by your slightest word or look of displeasure—I know it—I feel it—his is no heart of stone. He loves—say, say one word of kindness to him, and you will judge if he does not. Here, in the long watches of the night, although I have been weak and speechless, thought, the never dying one, kept its virgils in my brain, and told me all I now tell you ; but speaking to me with yet more bitterness. I plead—oh! it is hurriedly, feebly that I plead—harshly, too, I may have spoken to you ; my own dear mother, much, much you have to forgive me ; but my mind can scarcely master thought as yet, and I know not how I express myself. I only feel Horace must be loved—that here, on my death-bed, I would give all I have on earth to retrieve

my past harshness towards him—mother, say that he is loved.”

And as Arthur Lovaine spoke the last words, an air of exhaustion passed over his face, and his voice fell faintly on his mother’s ear, yet still he reiterated.

“Say it, mother; you will—you must lighten my heart in part of its remorse—soften his distress—then, then, perhaps, those cold tones of his will not fall upon my ear in the death-hour—mother—once more—kind mother—say it !”

Pale for a moment, as if about to utter a deliberate falsehood, Lady Chillingworth remained bending over her fainting son, with a wild, tearless gaze.

“Say it!—say that he is loved!” his lips repeated.

Yet still she paused—then suddenly a shower of tears fell from her eyes.

“Arthur—Arthur,” she said, “I will try—I do love him—but not, not as I love you !”

Arthur Lovaine fell back from his mother’s arms.

“Go to him then,” he said, “let him know how sweet a mother’s love is—let him know it, as I know it.”

BUT lady Chillingworth did not obey his wish. She thought of the earnest love of Horace, which she imagined her own coldness had chilled into indifference, and she dreaded lest the son she had despised should coldly receive her now tardy acknowledgment of remorse. Her ladyship did not, could not love Horace; she only felt she had done wrong, that he had been injured, and shrinking, as the erring ever shrink, from word or look, which could express her sense of the evil she had committed, she calmed Arthur with a promise of speaking to his brother on the morrow, and continued to sit by his side in deep and painful thought. A long time she thus remained, till at length the memory of Lord Ravenshill’s childish days—of her bitter neglect of him—and of the hard, laborious life, which he endured, when he trod the cold streets a worthless wanderer, bore heavily on her heart. She recollected his

utter isolation from all sympathy, after his restoration to his family, his patient endurance of her indifference, and that uncomplaining cheerfulness on his part which had at last relieved all the reproaches her conduct towards him had given rise to. Then his eagerness to comfort her when she thought that Arthur could not live—his efforts to save the latter—his constant watchfulness over him, rose vividly to her mind, and smote her with a late repentance. She gazed at the now silent and exhausted son beside her; she mused upon the misfortunes which had fallen on herself and on him, and she asked whether her own indifference to the loss of one child and her idolatry of the other, had not brought down a judgment upon her. Conscience whispered that it had, and once more she looked towards Arthur, and then she rose to seek the son she had hitherto spurned from her—not in love did she seek him, but in fear—in fear lest Heaven's wrath should humble her with yet bitterer sorrow to the dust. She had determined

to go and thank Heaven for his brother's life, to speak more kindly to him for the future. In acts of affection too, she re-resolved to be as generous towards him as towards Arthur, but she did not intend to say one word of self reproach, for though she felt remorse at her past conduct it was not that loving remorse which utters its own feelings, and prays for forgiveness in words as well as deeds ; shame, pride, and notwithstanding she now knew him to be good and honourable, a lingering feeling of aversion forbade her doing more, for her unkindness had been hitherto so calmly met by Horace, that she almost fancied he was above being hurt by her indifference, although Arthur had assured her to the contrary. She did not love him, and she guessed not that he loved her.

Yet for a moment or two Lady Chillingworth shrank from pursuing her errand ; but one glance at Arthur, whose pale features in the shady light of a distant taper

seemed almost like those of a corpse, urged her on, lest Divine justice should change their similitude to death into its reality. Hastening then down to the lower range of rooms, Lady Chillingworth sought for Horace, yet did not find him, till she thought he might possibly be in his own apartment. Arrived upon its threshold she stood there irresolutely for some minutes, because she saw by the light gleaming beneath the door that Lord Ravenshill was within, and she dreaded to enter. "For what am I come here?" she said, "not to say I love him—since love him I do not—not to say forgive? a mother need not surely say that. I come here but to thank him for Arthur's life—why then do I tremble? was it not his duty to save him? Has he done so much as to call for this love and repentance from me—Have I done so little! And stilling, as well as she could, the beating of her heart, she entered the room.

It was a small apartment, heavily draped with dark velvet hangings, and thickly

carpeted, a dim light was burning on a small table in its centre, and near this latter piece of furniture Lord Ravenshill was sitting, at the moment of his mothers' entrance, with his head resting on one hand, and his face averted from the door-way. Consequently, as Lady Chillingworth's silken garments made no noise in moving over the downy floor, she walked straight up to him, without his noticing her. She stood for some seconds by his side, she uttered his name, then finding that he did not answer, bent down and perceived he was asleep. Scarcely yet recovered from the shock of the shipwreck, and worn out with watching by his brother's side, even the utter agony Lord Ravenshill had experienced in the earlier part of the evening had become numbed beneath a sense of overwhelming weariness, which had seized him as he sat thinking in that dull, low room, and for a time he was insensible to both. Reader, have you ever watched the countenance of one who has suffered much, when partial sleep was composing the features into quiet, yet

could not completely efface their power of expressing the mind's continued action ? While slumber is stealing over our faculties, and ere it has entirely bound them beneath its power, our self-control weakens, and our thoughts, travelling as they will, through our brains, paint their predominant character on our faces, with the deep touch of their natural strength, till at length entirely subduing us, sleep stamps their last expression upon them to remain changelessly there until the moment of waking arrives.

And thus pain, weariness, and exhaustion, marked the features which Lady Chillingworth, by the light of the taper she held in her hand, now examined ; upon them she read the heart's despair, the spirit's sickening. A deadly paleness blanched the lips, cheeks and brow of Lord Ravenshill to an almost livid hue, and the long lashes of his eyes were wet with weeping ; his very breath seemed hushed, his hand lay as still upon the table before him as if sculptured in marble, and as Lady Chillingworth's glance

rested upon him, she feared, after she had once spoken, to speak again, lest her senses should tell her that she stood beside a corpse, instead of the living son she sought. The presence of actual grief has illimitable power over the mind, melts even the hardest at times: and gradually as the eye of the mother travelled over the expression of bitter sorrow on the dark, wasted features before her, her heart trembled with remorse towards the being she had hitherto disliked. Never until then had she steadily looked upon deep, despairing grief; for the first time in her life she read its withering signs upon the brow of her eldest son, stamped there in part, conscience told her, by her own hand; and motionless and wordless, Lady Chillingworth stood by her son's side; but thought was at its work, and slowly again, yet with a deeper colouring of self-reproach than at the couch of Arthur, rose the long dreamy scenes of past years before her tearless eyes.

She heard the trembling accents of the dull, plain child whom she had neglected,

once more ring in her ears ; she saw his sad, jealous looks ; she pictured him, her eldest born, the mocked and scorned dependant of Mr. Winkelmann—the recipient of a child's bounty—and that last thought brought another pang of self-reproach to her bosom. It told her that when all had shrunk from Horace in dislike, one amongst his earlier friends had loved him ; it told her that when her son had wished to acquit himself of a long owed debt of gratitude and love, she, she alone had urged his father to continue his severe prohibition against his doing so, and severed him from the only heart that had ever borne him true affection. Condemned by her means to a life of isolation from all sympathy, he had centred all his hopes upon the glorious, but icy cold honours of the mind, and crushed in heart, wasted in strength, he now sat before her, his pale countenance speaking it was true of the bright intellectuality of his character, but also of the striving spirit's utter exhaustion. And the conscience-stricken heart of the mother spoke at

length. She felt that the child the God of life had given her should have been nurtured in love—that in his very feebleness and deformity, he had claimed a more than ordinary care from her, and she knew he had been neglected and despised? For what had he at her hands? Bitter and utter indifference. No fond wish of hers had ever hovered over his cradle, no kindness had tended him in sickness, no smile had hailed his return to health. Yet often had the boy's dark eyes sought hers in hopes of better affection, till jealousy and fear taught them to sink abashed before her own, and the deep springing love of the young being, over whom it was her duty to watch, was cast back upon his heart to feed it with despair. On rolled the tide of thought, fast spoke the feelings of her heart—after he had fled her roof, did she mourn for him? did she ever think in sadness over the rash, boyish spirit, which, if not dead, could only be struggling or fainting amidst a world of trouble—perhaps of crime? No! her heart had felt scarcely ill at ease after

the first shock of the discovery ; she had believed ; she had almost hoped that he was dead ; and better, oh ! mother, would it have been for him to have died even then, than to have weathered through the misery he had done.

On rolled the tide of thought. He was before her as the youth, whose love for the home and parents he had quitted, proved too strong to remain concealed, even though he had willed it to be so. In the hour of his acknowledgment earnest and beseeching had been his appeal to her affection,—she had rejected it ! True, he had pleaded as in past times, with the same harsh features and ill-formed shape that the dainty mother shrunk from in his infancy ; but, God of Heaven ! now whispered the waking love within her heart, when soul speaks to soul should harshness of form or features influence our reply ?

Again she looked down upon the ashy features of her son ; he was before her now as the sorrow-stricken man with a strange dark look of grief upon his countenance.

Strongly did that look tell of past suffering, of withered hopes, of fixed despair ; yet in the patient sadness which it also expressed the sign of the soul's mastery over earthly care was pictured—spirit nor heart had selfishly fallen—strength still dwelt in the former, to will, to act serenely ; love, in the latter to bind it to earth in charity. And had not one word or look of the mother taught that spirit its earlier lessons of self-control ? that heart its deep well of love ? No ! a stranger had shaped their course ! she had withdrawn all sympathy, all love from them—all aid ; and she now stood by her grief-worn son, feeling that he owed her nothing — nothing but reproaches. Much, much had he endured in silence—much had he loved in silence too ; and now, after having saved his brother, after having given back into her arms the being who robbed him of her affection, without having received one word of love from her lips, he had come hither to spend perhaps some few moments in unseen, and unre-

strained grief. That was a bitter reproach to her! and remorse smote her sorely. She looked at the fallen tears upon his cheek; they accused her before Heaven and her own heart, and that heart at last bled—love moved within it. She laid the lighted taper, she had until that moment held, upon the table beside her, and clasping her trembling hands before her face, “I will not wake him yet,” she said, as she thought of his long vigils by his brother’s couch, “not yet—he has watched wearily—I will watch for him now!”

And she sat down on a chair near him in utter silence.

She thought again of her own unkindness—of his boyish love, and the hot, burning tears of repentance fell over her sleeping son. The rest of Lord Ravenshill was not sound; the short, quick sobs, in which Lady Chillingworth’s grief, notwithstanding all her efforts, found vent, awoke him, and he looked up. Starting to his feet, as his waking glance fell upon her ladyship, a

look of fear and of surprise passed over his countenance.

“Mother—you here!” he exclaimed.
“Is Arthur worse?”

And he glanced at her falling tears, and pallid cheeks.

“No, no,” Lady Chillingworth replied, in a half choked voice.

“Then what has happened?” he rejoined, still more hastily; “why—why are you weeping?”

Lady Chillingworth did not speak for a moment or two; but, as if afraid that he should leave her, she laid her hand upon his shoulder to detain him; then, in a trembling tone, said—

“I came here, Horace—I came—I was thinking of my own unkindness—of your distress—Horace, if ever a son could hate his mother, you must hate me.”

As Lady Chillingworth uttered these words, a look of astonishment mastered all traces of grief and weariness upon Lord Ravenshill’s countenance—

“Hate?” he repeated, after her; and his whole frame trembled beneath the hope that the long sought love of his mother was at length his. “Do not trifle with me—do not add another pang to this day’s misery—do not deceive me—hate!”

An earnest, anxious glance passed over Lady Chillingworth’s face, as she saw his emotion—

“You do not—you do not, Horace ” she eagerly exclaimed. “Now, God be thanked! for sparing me so bitter a punishment, my own dear son!”

And weeping over him, as she had never wept before, Lady Chillingworth fell upon his neck, as Horace folded her in his arms, and blessed her for the words she had, at length, spoken; and as her heart bowed and trembled before the loving gentleness of the son she had despised, its pride was conquered, and it poured itself out in self-reproaches over its past bitterness towards him.

“Horace,” said Lady Chillingworth, as

dried by his gentleness, her tears ceased to flow, "no thanks have I yet given you for your brother's life, or for the care with which you have hitherto tended him—how I love him, you well know—how I thank you, let your own heart guess."

But here Lady Chillingworth saw Horace's cheek turn suddenly pale, as a look of pain passed over his features; and she imagined, he experienced a latent jealousy of his brother; she remembered the coldness of voice and manner which Arthur had spoken of, and in anguish of heart, at last, felt another bitter consequence of her past fault. That pallor and look of pain still remained upon Lord Ravenshill's countenance when he answered her.

"Mention it not, mother," said he, rising as if to shade himself from the brilliant rays of the lamp before him; "that was but what every man would have done for his fellow creature—it was God's mercy saved us both."

And the livid hue of his countenance assumed a more deadly appearance, as he stood at a little distance from Lady Chillingworth, for he was thinking of the intelligence he had received in that hour of self-devotion, and the latter noticed his increasing agitation, and as she remembered the vain yearnings of Arthur for the love of his brother, her heart saddened, and her eyes filled with tears. She was stricken with a sense of her having done wider wrong than she had ever imagined she could have done; she felt that her own hand had sown the seeds of jealousy between the brothers, and she knew she could not now root them out. How, indeed, could she speak of love and duty to the son towards whom no similar feelings had hitherto visited her heart! Her lips could be but powerless, her heart had no right but to grieve in silence, and yet, as the fainting tones of Arthur rang through her brain, she bent a glance of earnest entreaty upon Horace, and then her tears fell afresh.

Lord Ravenshill saw that look, and though he could not understand its meaning, for he read in it no connection with his former words, he pitied her distress, and drawing back to his old place at her side, he asked her what she would have said. Lady Chillingworth glanced up; on her son's dark, pale features dwelt that look of ineffable sweetness, which, in happier days, seemed to be his own peculiar expression of countenance, and which rendered the harshness of its outlines almost neutral in their effect upon the gazer's mind. In its mild softness of expression, she read the depth of his forbearance and his love, and she murmured within herself—

“So gentle—will he not forgive? he has erred against him, less than I have erred.” And once more tremblingly addressing Horace, she endeavoured to plead for the son, whom she had left below, as that son had pleaded for him.

“I never guessed how much I owed

you," she began, "till Arthur related the whole of the shipwreck to me. "I did not know the real bitterness of your past life, till he placed it clearly before my eyes."

She saw that gentle look vanish quickly from the features of Lord Ravenshill ; yet, she continued—

"He placed it before me—he told me his gratitude was unutterable—that the old differences between you and him had faded from his mind long before he left Lisbon!"

And Lady Chillingworth waited, for one moment, to see whether Horace would imply his willingness to be thoroughly reconciled to his brother ; but waited in vain. Listening, as though by force, he sat still and silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground ; and, at last, she despaired of moving him, and with the natural impetuosity of her character, exclaimed, in the bitterness of her self-reproach—

"Horace—you do not—cannot love

Arthur—the fault is mine, rather than yours—you have tried—you do try to be kind and gentle ; but he sees, he feels that you are cold towards him—less charity, though more generosity have you given him, than me.”

Not one word, not one syllable passed the lips of Horace, but his whole frame shook with emotion, and his lips and cheeks became as lividly white as those of a corpse.

“You have spared me—but I am punished through him,” continued Lady Chillingworth, “he would have felt this coldness less, had you not been so generous and kind—Horace, Horace, he knows your offers of love are not heartfelt, and they have entered into his soul with the poignancy of steel.”

Lord Ravenshill rose from his seat in strong emotion—

“No more, mother,” he said, “no more; neither you nor I can bear this much longer.”

Thick, convulsive sobs nearly choked Lady Chillingworth's utterance—

“It is I, I,” she added, “who have sown the seeds of dislike between my own children, and now reap the fruits of them.”

Horace stood motionless, the livid hue of his countenance deepening more and more, till, as the passionate sobs of his mother met his ear, he strove to master his inward agitation, and said—

“Mother, for God's sake—forbear! Arthur cannot—does not know what I feel—I have kept down every word, and sigh, and tear, which could have made him experience mental as well as bodily pain on his couch of sickness. Neither you nor he can know the cause—the cause—”

“Of your estrangement?” interrupted Lady Chillingworth. “Oh! I know it, I feel it—and he does too—it is for that he would ask your forgiveness.”

Lord Ravenshill seemed, for one moment, thunder-stricken—speechless; till suddenly

a spark of living fire shone within his dull, dim eye, and he said—

“Has he then deliberately wrung my heart with this bitter, bitter pain? In wanton cruelty, robbed me of the only treasure I possessed? of her whom I have loved through long, long years of woe? Away then, mother, I can feel no pity for him—he cannot care for me—will not feel the loss of my affection—he who could act so, cannot. Back, back to him, and say, that I can forgive—man must forgive—but never—never more will I see him.”

And the wild brightness of his eye was watered by a falling tear, and Lady Chillingworth rose in bewilderment, at the sight of his sudden and violent emotion.

“What can you mean, Horace,” she said, “of whom are you speaking?”

He turned round, his whole frame quivering with passion.

“Of whom?” he repeated, “of Arthur, of myself, of her, whom he has deprived me of. Look you, mother, I can bear much

—I have borne much—in silence—without a sign ; under Heaven, and before the sun, my tears have not been shed—yet my heart weeps tears of blood. But you, you ask me to do that which no human heart, loving and suffering as mine does, can do—you ask me to love him who has withered the only life hope I possessed, and willingly won the love of her who once was mine. Such as I am, he must have known it was easy for him to do so—such as he was, he might have left me one heart to call my own. But no ! he wished to make me feel my utter worthlessness—the badge of my deformity more bitterly than you—my father, or the world ever did. Did I not say she would forget me ? How could she love the strange features which the mother hated ! But for whom has she forgotten me ? for him who now seeks my forgiveness ! and I thought he did not know it ! God of Heaven ! how could he speak to me of her ?—did he deem me less than human ?—Forgiveness ! forgiveness ! 'tis a good thing to thrust the steel into a man's heart,

and at the same moment cry ‘forgiveness!’ ”

And Horace, with a quick gesture of passion turned from his mother; he thought not of the pain his words must necessarily have given her, of the deep reproach they half expressed towards her—his own overwhelming sense of injury alone occupied his mind, for his old, passionate nature, generally so controlled, had beneath his present grief burst forth with all its latent strength. And Lady Chillingworth, stricken with wonder at his bitter words, and not understanding them, raised her eyes fearfully to his face, and wildly said—

“ I know not, cannot guess your meaning—Arthur has done you no wrong—tell me what he has done—he is dying—”

“ Dying?” repeated Horace, with a bitter laugh, “ well—let him die—is death so terrible? why, mother, it is better than life—life without hope. Dying? no, no, he will not die—he will be happy—why should he not? a brother’s crushed heart weighs but little in the balance against a

man's peace of mind—Mother, you should know that—else how could you come here to plead for him?”

Lady Chillingworth paused for a moment, and seemed to collect her thoughts before she answered him. Met by Horace with the utmost gentleness in the first instance, she was the more perturbed and astonished at this sudden outbreak of passion. Yet she felt and discerned he had mistaken some words of hers, which had aroused an insurmountable sense of injury in his mind, and she at once determined to enquire into its cause.

“Tell me at once and without reserve, Horace, although I do not deserve your confidence,” she said, “tell me what it is disturbs you?”

For some moments Lord Ravenshill was perfectly silent; then, as he saw his mother's terrified countenance, he seemed to struggle with himself, and gradually conquer his deep agitation—his dark eye again became clear, his hand firm, and his voice calm.

“ I have done wrong thus to speak,” he said, in a low, hollow tone, “ yet, yet I cannot but feel that which you have acknowledged to be true—Arthur’s knowledge of my engagement with Frances Fielding—his own love for her, and its success over mine.”

There was a longer pause than before between the mother and son, for rushing through the brain of Lady Chillingworth came thoughts of various hues—of wonder, of distress, of pity, as she guessed the half told cause for jealousy between the brothers, and she did not immediately answer.

“ He knew that I loved her,” continued Horace.

“ Not from me,” said Lady Chillingworth, “ I never mentioned that subject to any one.”

Horace started.

“ Did you not say he knew it?” asked he, breathlessly.

“ I!” replied she, “ no, no.”

He looked steadily at her.

“ Did not my father tell him of it?”

“ I think not,” earnestly answered Lady Chillingworth, “ he was not likely to speak on such a topic to Arthur !”

“ And Florence, Florence could not have done so, for she soon after left us,” rapidly rejoined Horace, and he drew a deep breath, and many minutes passed away in utter silence without his looking up from the table on which he had fixed his eyes. But if he spoke not, still over his countenance flitted traces of the thoughts within him, and quickly did expression after expression of pain, doubt, love, and jealousy succeed each other there, till as he felt his mother draw nearer and clasp his hand, he suddenly looked up. In her pleading eyes were written her fears for himself, for Arthur—her comprehension of the combat within his breast, and for some seconds they rested enquiringly on his, then suddenly as she saw deep lines of anguish come back to his uplifted brow, as if he were about to ask what sacrifice she wished him to accom-

plish for his brother's sake, she threw her arms around his neck, and sobbed heavily.

“Mother, mother!” exclaimed Horace, as he returned her embrace, “nay, be calm—I misjudged him—no human being could have spoken in the death hour, as he spoke, except in perfect ignorance of the pain he was giving—he knew it not—I thank God for that—he is my brother still.”

CHAPTER IX.

“ Mais qu'ils se passent des orages au fond du cœur ! ” and how little can those around one form an idea from outward signs of what may be overshadowing the inner world of the heart.

Mrs. Hemans.

Come back to my heart, thou wild, wild dream,
Come back to my heart once more ;
For now, I can dream thee o'er again,
And think of the days of yore !

In those worshipp'd days of yore, sweet dream,
Ever thou and I were one—
My being dwelt in thy fairy hopes,
And thou wert my life's fair sun.

As a glimpse of Heaven thou didst appear,
As a star of wondrous light,
Till a storm cloud closed o'er thy beauteous form,
And thy radiance clothed with night.

But come back to my heart, thou wild, wild dream,
Come back to my heart once more !
For the Future's bright with Hope's fairest light,
As bright as in days of yore.*

LADY CHILLINGWORTH retired from Horace's room to watch again by the side of Arthur, and to soothe the anxiety the latter expressed on his brother's account by a partial relation of what had occurred between them. Not a syllable, however, of the half-revealed secret of his love for Frances Fielding did she utter, for she dreaded to agitate him ; but, nevertheless, it pressed strongly on her thoughts, and overwhelmed her with an inextricable confusion of doubts and fears. Deeply she sorrowed for both her sons, since she felt that the girl who could exchange one brother's love for the other's was not worthy of either. Much

* These words have been set to music by MR. THOMAS HENRY SEVERN, composer of " We Met," " Go, Happy Rose," &c. &c., and published by Duff and Hodgson, — Oxford Street.

she revered Lord Ravenshill for the magnanimity and patience with which he had curbed down the yearnings of his passionate nature beneath the bitterness of the blow he had received ; passionately she wept over the present affliction of the once brilliant Arthur ; and long she vainly mused over her own thoughts, with the hope of finding a clue to a brighter future than that which they now painted to her mind.

Lord Ravenshill, meanwhile, being left alone after his mother's exit, dwelt, for some time, on her sudden love for him—on Arthur's—and on an irresistible wish, which he, at present, felt to leave the home and society he had once so eagerly sought. He sickened for unrestrained solitude ; he felt that however deeply his mother might love him, she could not sympathise with one hundredth part of the feelings he possessed ; and then he turned with a shudder from the idea of the happiness which now might have been so soon his, had Frances continued true to him. He thought of his oldest,

kindest friend, Mr. Winkelmann—of Harry Fielding—of Frances—but he guessed not that those, whom he so prized, had been, and still were, true to him. Presently he gazed round the apartment in which he sat, and by the light of the lamp before him, he discerned two or three letters lying on the table yet unopened. With a desire to occupy his mind, which, from the moment of his mother's entrance, he had suffered to be a mere chaos of conflicting doubts and fears, he took up the first, and glanced over it—it was a letter on business—easily read, and quickly thrown aside; but as he was about to unseal the second, he looked at the superscription, and as he did so, in sudden surprise, he let it fall. It was the letter that Frances Fielding had written to ask for the aid she and her brother so much wanted, when about to leave Lincoln's Inn, and for which they had, at length, turned to him as their last earthly resource. Many, many minutes passed before Lord Ravenshill again looked at that letter; with one hand raised half-lifelessly to his face,

on which strong lines of pain had formed, he remained for some time scarcely breathing from suppressed emotion. But, at length, the thin, dark fingers, animated with a sense of life, were firmly pressed upon the broad white brow, and his respiration came more freely, though still, at intervals, deep, low sobs broke it away, and seemed almost to suffocate him. Reared in self-control, Lord Ravenshill, even in the most trying moments, never willingly gave way to emotion, and if the iron entered into his soul, it always writhed in silence—though, perhaps, in mortal agony. It could not now—the hour had come, when, as he imagined, each cherished hope of his life was about to receive its death warrant from the hand of her he loved, and in a passionate paroxysm of tears, the spirit's strength passed away. What could that letter tell him, he thought, but of her faithlessness?—his misery? She had never written to him before—had said she never would write ; the wish then to be freed from the engagement was the only motive which

could have induced her to do so now. Yes—yes; it was to tell him that her infatuation for him was over—that she loved elsewhere—that for him, love, and life, and all the blissful moments of the past, were but a dream. She had found one whom she loved better than she could love him, whom she could regard not with the love of pity, but of admiration—clad, too, he was like herself, in the glorious garb of beauty—how then could he compete with him, or blame her? Blame her? had not his heart ever doubted its own happiness, and bade him dread the future? had not a sad presentiment ever dwelt within his mind, that his life would be the life of the lonely one? But—ah! Heaven, whom did she love? the brother, whose harshness, told to her ear alone she had bewailed—the brother, towards whom his heart yearned, yet shrunk from? Fool that he was to listen to words of love from the lips of woman!—to dream that one of that beauty-loving sex could love the deformed—the old in thought, the worn in heart. And yet—yet he had

deemed her above its prejudices—above the prejudice of paying more than due homage to that man's as well as woman's idol—beauty? Was he so himself? did he not worship in her the rare personal loveliness, which claimed the admiration of all who knew her—why then should not she acknowledge its power in another?

He was set apart for wretchedness—he had been suffered to know the bliss of loving, and being beloved, only the more to feel the utter agony of the present hour. He glanced towards the letter—should he open it, and read her defence—the cruel words it contained? No, his heart sickened at the thought—he could not. He would try to have the memory of no bitter word from her—the blow which had been indirectly dealt to him, by another's hand, should not now receive a second impulse from her; was not his heart lacerated enough? She had been kind, and gentle, and good towards him; her childish pity had been his—even more, her maidenly compassion, and perhaps—perhaps, thought

Horace, she mistook that for love, and now, having found out her blindness, writhes beneath the knowledge of her engagement with me? But she shall not—she shall not for long,” he murmured, and he hastily took the letter once more within his hand.

He looked again at the delicate superscription, and his tears once more fell over it; for one moment, there was a slight hesitation, afterwards, a quick, irresistible impulse within him, and in another second of time, the letter was a heap of ashes on the table by his side, and hope had died its bitter death without one remembered word of unkindness from Frances. Then came the thought that he must write to her, to say he had received her letter, and knew all. But many and many a minute passed before Horace found himself sufficiently calm to do so—the strong, stinging sense of injury, which he at first felt, would have made him pour forth words of fire—the bitterness of his sorrow, words of complaining love, had he listened to their first

suggestions; but he was determined not to do so, and the cold, constrained lines which Frances received in return for her communication contained all the comments that his pen or voice, from that moment, ever made upon her supposed heartlessness. Well would it have been for him had his note expressed his feelings more fully, since one reproach from him to Frances would have saved them both many bitter hours of sorrow, and dissolved the mystery of the misunderstanding between them.

On that night, as if to form another contrast to the misery he experienced, Lord Chillingworth, who had instantly set off from the north of England, on receiving the news of his sons' shipwreck, arrived at Eagle's Nest, and after having seemed, for once in his life, so actually overpowered by their near escape from death, as to evince his parental affection in a much more demonstrative manner than he usually did, he walked up to Horace, who was standing a few paces from him, and after gazing sted-

fastly at him for one moment, said, in a low, unsteady voice,

“Horace, I misunderstood you in past times—and now, I cannot forgive myself for having done so.”

The pale, wan brow of Lord Ravenshill, on which a look of utter exhaustion lingered from the late agony of feeling he had gone through, nevertheless slightly flushed at these words of his father, the cold, damp hand, which the latter shook warmly as he spoke, trembled much, and the strength of the strong man who had calmly weathered the rough of the world at last gave way beneath the continual whirl-wind of passionate emotion, which for the last six hours had been sweeping over his soul.

“I am glad,” he tried to say, “that the past has been forgotten—I am glad that—”

But here the faltering of the low, unequal voice checked the utterance of his further words. Yet as if he felt this exhibition of feeling was not exactly in accord-

ance with his father's notions upon the subject, he instantly tried to check it. Lord Chillingworth, however, was really touched by the sight of the emotion evinced by his son, and did not for once in his life think it out of place. Looking fixedly at him, he merely said,—

“ Horace, you are no canting Pharisee—you act up to what you say with very little affectation or noise. Once I mistrusted you ; but 'tis long since you have been winning ground in my esteem, and now—”

“ And now,” eagerly interrupted Lord Ravenshill with a wish to stay any explanation of the neglect he had experienced from his father in his earlier days—“ now, you know me better—I am glad of that.”

Lord Chillingworth paused again for a moment or two—fixed another look upon his son, then turned sharply on his heel, as he answered,—

“ That will not do, Horace ; let old accounts be cleared up between us—hear me out—'tis a debt due to justice that I should say what I first intended to do—I tell you

then that I misunderstood you in past times—so did your mother—and,—”

“Father, my Lord—” once more interrupted Horace. “I have my mother’s love—yours—I do not wish—”

“To hear our faults recapitulated?” returned the Marquis unsteadily, “be it so. Yet, believe me, Horace, they are not the less deeply felt.”

And the conference of the father and son was at an end.

That night closed in over many conflicting feelings in the heart of Horace Lovaine: over joy at the regained affection of his parents—over sorrow at the faithlessness of Frances towards him. Throughout the night the tempest within him kept sleep from his swelled and weary eyelids, and a fever seemed to burn within his veins. He would have given worlds to have been free from the necessity of staying beneath the same roof as his brother, and he tried even then to compass some scheme which would separate him for awhile from his family,

but when he thought of his parents' renewed affection for himself, he felt obliged to stay awhile with them—lest his departure should appear purposely unkind. So ill did he look, however, the next morning at the breakfast table, that Lady Chillingworth, although she guessed the true cause of his indisposition, was nevertheless alarmed at it, and with a woman's tact perceiving a longer residence beneath the same roof as his brother would only serve at present to increase it, she asked the Marquis if Horace could not superintend some alterations which were then taking place at Chillingworth House as well as he could, and whether he should not go in his place, and Lord Chillingworth, to whom his wife had revealed what occasioned their son's pallid looks, readily agreed to her proposition.

It was settled then that Lord Ravenshill should leave Eagle's-nest for a month or two, and, accordingly, he prepared to do so. No words respecting Frances passed between him and his brother ere he started—for Arthur, ever since his over-exertion in

pleading for Horace to his mother, had relapsed into a state of weakness which precluded him from speaking much, and which obliged Lord Ravenshill, before his departure, to warn Lady Chillingworth not to mention his pre-engagement with Frances in his presence, lest the slightest shock upon that cherished point of feeling should prove dangerous to him. Her ladyship acquiesced in the wisdom of his advice; and, at the moment of parting, gave him a pleasing task to perform, which consisted in an injunction from his father and herself, to spare no pains in immediately tracing out Lady Florence—to whom, since their hearts had been softened by affliction, they were now anxious to be reconciled. This service Lord Ravenshill readily undertook to accomplish, although, for some time past, notwithstanding all his efforts, he had not been able to ascertain where she resided.

It was full a month before Horace again paid a visit to Eagle's-nest, where Lord and Lady Chillingworth still continued to reside in

consequence of Arthur's being too weak to be removed elsewhere. During that time he had seen nothing of his old friends—he had not expected to do so, for Mr. Winkelmann he knew was a wanderer on the Continent, by the letters he now and then received from him, but which, through the writer's, in this instance, unhappy sense of delicacy, never mentioned the Fieldings' misfortunes or his own, and the Fieldings he never sought. With respect to Lady Chillingworth's injunctions regarding his sister, he was entirely unsuccessful—not a trace of her could be found—and as, amidst the blight of all his hopes, the restoration of Florence to the affection of his parents was now the subject nearest his heart, he determined to return to them, and intimate his wish to travel in quest of her on the Continent, since it was there he had last seen her.

Towards the end of April, then, Lord Ravenshill arrived at Eagle's-nest. Things had not much amended since his departure; for the health of Arthur was still very pre-

carious, and the recovery of his eye-sight still a matter of doubt. Many, too, were the hours of torture which Lord Ravenshill was again obliged to pass with the brother who had unknowingly wrung his very heart ; and much did Lady Chillingworth marvel, all worldly wise as she was, that Horace could so command himself as to act and talk, and be so calmly gentle with his rival. He, however, from his tried medical skill, knew well the mere thread on which the life of Arthur hung ; and, in the near presence of death, felt more compassion for him, than anger or grief. At times, too, when he saw the patience with which he bore the long, weary illness that had worn him down to the weakness of a child, a strong trace of love mingled with the pity he experienced towards him, although its current was embittered by the recollection of the present and the past. And he often sat with his brother calmly and cheerfully, now the first paroxysm of grief was over, and his old power of self-command his own again ; he had toiled

too long to obtain its sceptre for it to be wrested from his grasp during any length time, and kindly, but, nevertheless, with a slightly constrained manner, he still sought the company of Arthur, so that no further suspicion of his dislike towards him should haunt his rest. Was not this spending more than his own life for his? The passive energy it required to do so continually, was fast sapping the strength of Horace Lovaine.

It was one evening, as the two brothers were sitting together in this manner, that Arthur at length fulfilled his long promised task of detailing the outlines of his intimacy with Annie. With what feelings Lord Ravenshill prepared himself to listen to the narration cannot easily be described: when his brother first mentioned his wish to do so, he nerved himself to bear the very worst pangs of jealousy in silence—to bear distinct proofs of the faithlessness of Frances without an exclamation of anger; for he knew how slight the tie was that

bound Lord Arthur to life, and he dreaded lest any emotion on his part should rudely break it. In silence therefore he suffered his brother to begin his tale, and heard him describe his meeting with Annie at D——, and their subsequent acquaintance, without dreaming that Annie was the Frances Lord Arthur loved; for the latter accustomed as he was to call her by the name under which he knew her at D——, and which he had only dropped when speaking to Horace, in order to make him more fully understand whom he loved, designated her by no other appellation till he detailed his meeting with her in Somersetshire, and then indeed he spoke of her by both names. The truth suddenly burst upon Lord Ravenshill's mind as he did so, and he was convinced that Arthur had made some mistake, and that he did not, could not, love the real Frances Fielding of Lincoln's Inn. But he felt for the moment stunned, and ere he had recovered from the bewilderment this unexpected hope caused him to feel, he had listened to the reasons which Lord Arthur

gave for deeming Annie no other than the Frances Fielding whom Horace was acquainted with. He said that one day, just before his departure for the Continent, he had seen Harry Fielding (whom he knew by sight from having often seen him with Horace,) and Annie walking arm-in-arm on the road to Brompton, and that having followed them to a villa there, which they entered, he had inquired who they were of the servant girl who opened the door, and who happened to linger behind on the steps after they had passed in, and received for answer that they were no other than Mr. and Miss Fielding.

But Lord Ravenshill here interrupted his brother by saying, in a half choked voice—

“It is Annie Cummins, Annaly Childe whom you love, Arthur, not Frances Fielding. You have made a strange mistake somehow—you love Annaly Childe.”

A wild look of eagerness passed over the sick man's face.

“What is it you say?” he murmured, “that Annie, my own Annie is Miss Childe

—the brilliant heiress—my once destined wife—Horace, I am sick with doubt, excitement—this is madness!”

There was the cold damp of faintness on the brow of Arthur Lovaine, which betokened a mind strained to its utmost pitch of endurance, and Lord Ravenshill, perceiving this, hastily explained that he was sure of the fact he asserted; that he had met Annie as Miss Childe on the Continent, had been introduced to her under that name, and that she had readily acknowledged their mutual acquaintance at D——. Eagerly Arthur asked for an explanation of her having assumed the names of Cummins and Fielding, and Horace said he could easily give one.

“How, how?” eagerly demanded his brother; and Lord Ravenshill, calming down his own agitation as well as he could, proceeded to satisfy Arthur’s curiosity.

“Old Mr. Childe,” he said, “was a labourer’s son, and in his earlier days was employed in one of the lower departments of the great brewery of Childe and Co.,

where, through his own exertions and good conduct, he rose to be clerk, and then junior partner in the business, and eventually made his fortune by marrying his master's only daughter,—on which occasion, in accordance with the former's wishes, he changed his surname for that of his wife. That part of the story perhaps you know, as every body knows it ; but now I will explain the secret of Annaly Childe's masquerade. When Mr. Childe became rich he did not forget to provide for his parents, or indeed for any of his very near relations ; his brothers, for instance, were well provided for, his sisters comfortably portioned off—one of the latter is old Dame Henrichs, whom you and I know—Yet, liberal as he was, he still in one way neglected his family, since he rarely visited or owned them—he was ashamed of his origin, I believe. The old couple, however, soon perceived this conduct, and once or twice reproached him with it ; but he never felt much compunction at their remonstrances, till his father happened, on

one occasion to send for him while he was giving a grand fête to some of his fashionable friends, and he forbore immediately complying with his request, that he should come and see him. When he did, when he went to the house of his parents, the old man was dead. This affected him deeply at the time, and ever since, as a sort of penance for refusing his dying father's wish, at the end of every fourth year he and his daughter leave their sumptuous home, and live for awhile in a very frugal manner—that is as a well-to-do farmer and his child would live.”

“And they were living in that style when I first saw them at D——?” interrupted Arthur, eagerly, “were they not?”

“Yes,” replied Lord Ravenshill; and then he added—“During the period of their secession from fashionable life Mr. Childe generally retires to a village where he is not well-known, and takes an assumed name, which he binds himself and his daughter not to disown till the appointed

time has expired. This the old man does to remind him of his original condition, and also as a just punishment for his neglect of his father. He has never of late years been ashamed of his origin—never sought to conceal it—and he has bred up his daughter in the same sentiments.

Lord Arthur lay silent for a few minutes, his brother had finished speaking, but at length said—

“ And the singular coincidence of name! and the ring !”

Lord Ravenshill was at a loss what to answer ; he knew the ring had belonged to Frances, for he held it in his hand, and was even then examining it ; yet he now felt assured that there must have been some circumstance which had taken it out of the former's possession, and transferred it to Miss Childe's.

“ She may have lost it or given it away,” suggested he at last, “ it might have travelled through many hands before it reached Miss Childe's.”

Lord Arthur lay back upon the sofa, exhausted by the vehemence of the enquiry.

“There is a strange mystery somewhere,” said he, with a sigh, “eventually, however, it will be all the same to me—the heiress of thousands will not look upon me as she once did, neither will Annie. How indeed can I expect she will, I am but a wreck of strength—of hope. I shall soon wed a more loving bride—even Death.”

“Say not so,” returned Lord Ravenshill, hastily, “you are daily gaining strength. I would not contradict Death’s certain fiat, but, Arthur, believe me you still may hope.”

There was a moment’s pause ; and then the sick man grasped his brother’s hand—

“Horace,” he said, “earth yet is dear to me—for I would see her once more, yet all between us is finished—finished ; yet speak of her, tell me all you know.”

And with gentle attention Horace again listened to Arthur’s further enquiries respecting Annie’s residence at Eagle’s-Nest, and on the Continent, although his own

heart was tortured with the recollection of the cruel missive he had sent to Frances. Presently his brother said—

“ Horace, your voice, your words are now as kind as they were in old times at Lisbon—it was then but jealousy which made you shrink from me, jealousy that in the heart of man is less easily forgotten than the fear of death, or the remembrance of the deepest injuries.”

And Lord Ravenshill's answer satisfied him that he was right, and a new-born confidence was established between the brothers.

CHAPTER X

Spirit whisper ! spirit whisper,
Shall I listen to thy voice ?
Spirit whisper ! spirit whisper,
Dost thou bid my heart rejoice ?

Fair and soothing words thou speakest
Hope is murm'ring through thy lay ;
And my throbbing heart no longer
Owneth sorrow's dull decay.

Yet my fault is unforgiven—
They will scorn the wand'rer's woe,
Once again in dream-like music,
Spirit, speak of Hope's bright glow.

Hush ! I hear thee—faintly backward
To the lov'd home of my youth,
Turn I at thy earnest whisper,
For I feel it murmurs truth.

Spirit whisper, spirit whisper,
Thy soft tones are full of bliss ;
'Tis a mother's voice thou bearest,
Ah! I did not dream of this.*

UPON very slight foundations great dissensions are built; people in their intercourse with their friends, believe facts asserted to their prejudice far too readily; and without sufficiently examining them, most thoroughly condemn the accused party, particularly if the reports they hear respecting them, painfully or injudiciously reflect upon themselves. For a most trivial offence, they perhaps break the bonds of a long friendship, and past hours of the sweetest communion and deepest affection only then serve to embitter present angry ones. But at length a re-action is sure to take place ;

* These words have been set to music by MR. THOMAS HENRY SEVERN, composer of "We Met," "Go, Happy Rose," &c. &c., and published by Duff and Hodgson, 65, Oxford Street.

the scales fall from their eyes, the truth becomes clear—the self-torturing pangs of remorse live where anger once existed, and the heart longs to rehabilitate itself in the affection from which its own hastiness severed it.

This process of feeling often takes place in thought alone; no words, perhaps, are uttered, no look framed by which it is expressed; yet in the silent recesses of the heart, it lives through its periods of silent suspicion, anger, rupture, and remorse,—for much do they who love, regret a past thought of unkindness towards a true friend, even though that thought dies within them unspoken. If unuttered thoughts of injustice are remembered in such moments with bitterness, how much more deeply must those be felt which have been expressed in words or actions!

Strong were the sudden pangs which seized Horace Lovaine's mind when, in consequence of his strange explanation with his brother, respecting the identity of Frances Fielding, he could no longer doubt that she

had loved him. Bitterly did he feel the ungrateful return he had made to one who had sacrificed so much to secure his happiness, and eagerly on the day following that on which it took place, he left Eagle's-Nest to gain her forgiveness for having so blindly believed in her faithlessness. His sister was for the time forgotten—thoughts of Frances, whom he had so long loved, alone filled his heart, and he sped on his way to town—to Brompton ; and from thence to Lincoln's Inn as quickly as the most rapid conveyance could carry him. Disappointment, however, waited Lord Ravenshill in both places, for he found the Brompton house was to let, that of Lincoln's Inn tenanted by persons of whom he knew nothing, and who, in reply to his enquiries after the Fieldings, could only inform him that, during the last two years, they had been very unfortunate; and had, in consequence, given up business and quitted London.

“Quitted London! how? when?” Lord Ravenshill demanded, but in vain; for the

clerk in Harry's offices—those offices which he knew so well—and which yet seemed to retain their usual familiar appearance—knew nothing regarding them, and assured him that his master did not either. Horace, with considerable impatience, then went back again to Brompton, and from thence to Mr. Winkelmann's house in the Strand—which he found did not now belong to him, and where he heard the same story, and nothing more, repeated for his satisfaction. By a providential thought, however, he soon learnt further news respecting his old friends, although he could not ascertain their present residence. Recollecting that he had been on terms of intimacy with two or three families who had visited the Fieldings in former days, he, at length, resolved to call upon them in succession, till he gained all the particulars he wished to know. This was a good method, no doubt, and, in fact, proved rather more successful than his former. From several of the families in question, he heard of the failure

of Mr. Fielding's coal mines—his death—and of Harry's and Mr. Winkelmann's retirement from their respective professions—but the main point of information—namely, the knowledge of the Fieldings' present residence he did not gain. A superadded supposition too, on their part, that the latter gentleman, having been ruined by Mr. Fielding's speculations, had entirely broken his former intimacy with his family, added to the wretchedness Lord Ravenshill experienced, for not having had the slightest hint of their misfortunes from his old friend, he could not help partially believing it. Several other scraps of news he also heard which, though he did not exactly credit, he could not help suffering from, particularly when communicated to him in the following delicate manner by Mrs. Brownrigg, who was one of the ladies he thus troubled with his enquiries.

“The poor Fieldings!” pathetically moralized that amiable woman, “the poor Fieldings! but there, did I not always tell

them how it would be—what could be expected from such rash, misguided people? Ah! one feels compassion for them, 'tis true; still compassion should not blind one to their faults. My lord, I always told Mrs. Fielding that, in *my* opinion, her husband had not a very good head for speculation—she, however, poor woman, wouldn't believe it! Then the style they used to live in was preposterous—preposterous—a country house! a villa, indeed! belonging to a man who was not ever worth half so much as my husband! Well, it was always *my* idea they would come to a crash some day or other—things could not long go on as they did—dinners, and theatres, and balls! Mr. Beckford—I beg your pardon, my lord, where was all the money to come from to support such extravagance? How exceedingly glad I am that nothing ever took place between that young spendthrift, Harry, and my Em—ahem! I was going to be rather indiscreet. Miss Fielding, did your Lordship say? Oh! she was looking

exceedingly well, when I last saw her. Some people do contrive to look well through all sorts of distresses—perhaps, by not feeling them so exquisitely as other people do—now my Emma—whenever anything affects her spirits you can see it in an instant, poor girl! she is so susceptible. I heard, too, that silly man, Harvey, had again proposed, the simple old fool! I suppose she will now take him, as there is nothing better for her on the tapis. Ah! well, pretty girls should not be too particular, else they may go through the wood, and through the wood, and cut a crooked stick at last. They say, however, Harvey is tremendously rich—and, perhaps, that will satisfy Frances—for I don't believe she cares for anything but her own little comforts—some people don't, you know.”

Poignant were the pangs Lord Ravenshill experienced in thinking over his hasty act of injustice towards Frances; and an irresistible presentiment which suddenly rose to his mind that the letter he so rashly

destroyed, had been written to him in a moment of distress, made him feverish with anxiety for the renewal of their intimacy. That anxiety, however, was destined to endure for long; a wearisome search throughout the metropolis, in the hopes of meeting or lighting upon Franciss, though, day by day undertaken, proved unsuccessful; and soon, as if entirely to break off all possibility of finding a cue to their actual retreat, the letters of Mr. Winkelmann were suddenly discontinued; and his address being unknown to Lord Ravenshill, the latter was completely left to his own resources in this endeavour to renew the acquaintance with the Fieldings. He went down to Wales to their old estate there; but every acre of land had been sold long, long ago, and no one knew anything of the former proprietors; he went down to Mrs. Pottinger's, near Epping Forest; the old lady was comfortably asleep beneath the green, green turf of a neighbouring churchyard—and weeks formed themselves into

months, before Lord Ravenshill could bring himself to acquiesce in Lady Chillingworth's now urgent wish of his again seeking Florence upon the Continent. From some indirect source the Marquis and his wife had heard that their daughter was widowed, and their hearts sorely bled with parental affection for her at last, and they earnestly desired once more to receive her beneath their roof.

Lord Ravenshill then set off for the Continent in compliance with his parents' wishes ; but with a heart sick with anxiety, and a frame spent with fatigue. The yet unannealed act of injustice, which he had committed towards Frances, weighed upon his mind, possessed his thoughts, and threw him into that restless state of being, which renders the nervous system so exquisitely susceptible to every disagreeable impression. He feared to face the future, because he imagined it would bring him dread calamities ; he sickened over the present—dared not look back upon the past, and vainly he tried to rule his spirit as in old times he

had ruled it. The thought of Frances Fielding's having bestowed her love upon another had been insupportable; the idea that he had unjustly wounded her to the very quick was more so, and restlessly, eagerly, though tying himself down to the strictest enquiries, respecting his sister, did he hurry over the Continent, and strive to accomplish the task he had in hand.

He came back without having found the slightest clue to her present retreat, and passing hastily from Dover to Chillingworth House, where his parents now were, he intended to disclose the result of his unsuccessful mission more fully to them, and then again institute a double search in London, and its vicinity, for Lady Florence and the Fieldings. It was a thick November evening, when his travelling carriage drove rapidly into Chillingworth Park; a damp mist shrouded the grounds, and seemed so impenetrable, that the coachman was obliged to have lights at the lodge to make his way through them to the house. Though the weather was not very cold, a sense of chilli-

ness took possession of Lord Ravenshill, on passing by such dreary scenery, and he was heartily glad when he entered his mother's dining-room, and saw a brilliant-looking fire in the grate. Lord and Lady Chillingworth were there expecting his arrival—his brother too; and as they greeted his entrance with an affectionate welcome, the countenance of Horace, for the first time for many a long day, mantled with a smile as he dwelt upon the difference of their present and past feelings towards him. Yet pleased and happy as he appeared to be in meeting with this evidence of their regard for him, his parents could not help being struck with the worn and haggard appearance which months of anxiety had given him, and an enquiry as to its cause hovered on the lips of Lady Chillingworth, when the door of the apartment was suddenly opened, and an apparition entered, which, for a time, effectually put a stop to all her further enquiries.

It was that of a woman closely veiled, and clothed in deep mourning, whose quick

and graceful movements, as she stepped over the threshold of the room, seemed to betoken her a lady, although her garments, which were of the coarsest materials, denoted the contrary. Clad in a common, black stuff dress, over which, by the apparently nervous grasp of a thin, ungloved hand, a thick woollen shawl was gathered ; she presented herself in silence for some moments, to the astonished regards of the assembled group, on which she intruded ; then walking forward with a faltering step, raised her veil, and disclosed the beautiful, though faded, features of Florence Lovaine.

Her dress was damp with the wet mist she had probably passed through on her way to the Park ; her long brown hair was braided back from her keen, fine features, and her lips were fixedly pressed together with a look of determination, though the relaxed lines on the upper part of her face bespoke exhaustion ; her eyelids were, for some seconds, closed over her dim eyes, as they wandered over the persons towards whom she advanced.

“Florence! my child!” exclaimed Lady Chillingworth, suddenly rising from her seat, and approaching her, “is it you?”

The voice seemed to rouse Lady Florence from the state of torpor which appeared to oppress her. She recognised it as her mother’s; but, perhaps, from the confusion her mind then experienced, she did not perceive the thrill of tenderness which ran through it, and ere the astonishment of the others could speak itself in words, she appeared to gather strength within herself, and calmly, yet very sadly, she spoke.

“I do not come here upon my own account, father,” she said, “I do not intend to try again for your forgiveness, mother; I have striven long enough for that—and I have long since sat down in patience, amidst my own sorrows—justly merited as they are, no doubt, yet, nevertheless, hard to bear. I come not to you for myself, then, but for one—who, if all I hear at D—— is true, must be dear to you now, though once he was the object of your dislike. I am here to tell him that the friends of his

youth—the love of his better days—have sealed their own misery—believe him to be that which I would he *were* not, that which I told them he could not be even in face of proof, which might have shaken the faith of the firmest believer.”

“Florence, where are they?—there was a mistake—rashly credited—bitterly repented,” exclaimed Horace, moving closer to his sister, and eagerly addressing her ; for he instantaneously felt her words were addressed to him.

“What said you, Horace?” she echoed, a mistake?—what mistake? you wrote that letter—you refused all succour—abjured all love. Brother, even the promised bliss of gaining the affection of the parents who once disowned you, cannot excuse you for having acted so cruelly. They—they, I know made you write those bitter lines—not your own heart. Mother—father, do not speak! I have much to say—I will listen to your reproaches afterwards—soon relieve you of my presence. Horace, plead for thos you love—for your-

self ; say, oh say that Frances who first led you to a home when you had none, believes you have cast back the love she gave you, believes you have left her alone, unaided, to weather through poverty, disgrace—for her brother is in prison—death—for her mother is dying. Tell them that through their commands, you refused the poor succour, which, after many moments of scruple, she resolved to ask you for, in an hour of the deepest distress. Say, that obedience to their commands has made you ungrateful to your early benefactors—that Frances shuns all thoughts of you—her brother despises you—plead that they give you back your own honour, your own heart—aye ! for I yet do not believe your own spirit ever taught you to be thus callous towards friends so true, or love so pure !”

“I have not been—cannot be,” exclaimed Lord Ravenshill, pressing closely to his sister, and gazing wildly into her face, while his parents and brother, astonished at the passionate and as yet inexplicable

scene passing before them remained silent with surprise. "Succour, did they ask for?—and I—blind—mad-man that I was—in jealous rage—the letter—the letter—Florence, you saw it? in a night of misery, in a moment of madness—My God, where are they?"

"Where?" echoed Florence, "where? Two days ago Henry Fielding was still under arrest for debt—Frances and her mother in the sorry lodgings in which I have lived with them since my return to England; but to-morrow or the next day they will leave for the north, since from an indispensable journey which Mr. Harvey will soon be obliged to take to America, and which I knew not of till yesterday, the marriage will be solemnised immediately."

"Marriage?" echoed Lord Ravenshill, his cheek and brow suddenly blanching, "what marriage?"

"Have I not mentioned it?" returned Lady Florence—"that of Frances and Mr. Harvey,—I only knew of it yesterday—

did I not tell you of it before, it was the principal cause of my coming down here so suddenly—to give you a chance of breaking it off. On, on to London then if you would redeem the past—explain—but what have you to explain? you say there was a mistake? what mistake? Do not go if you must turn back from her in shame—tell me the motive of your writing that cruel letter.”

Lord Ravenshill seemed to rouse himself from the stupor with which he was listening to his sister's wildly spoken intelligence, and paler than ashes, said, “I was told she loved elsewhere—I never read the letter she wrote to me, because I thought it contained but an account of her falsehood, and dared not. I have been seeking her for months past—the address, the address, Florence—I will go to London to-night.”

Lady Florence seemed to understand the hurried explanation he gave her, hastily uttered the direction he required, and the next moment, without speaking, and in the travelling dress he wore, Lord Ravenshill

turned towards the door. But at the threshold he paused—came back again, and confronted the Marquis. He fixed his eyes with a look of agony on his face.

“I go, my lord,” he said, “to explain a grievous error—that has perhaps precipitated matters to this pitch of misery. Yet if she—of whom we have spoken before—still holds to the resolution of not wedding me until your consent is gained, the explanation, though it will clear me of cruelty, will still leave me powerless to—”

“Alleviate the past?” interrupted Lord Chillingworth, who already knew of the misunderstanding between the brothers, and understood the whole scene; “You would wed this young girl as of old? You have my full consent to do so—bring her hither if she has no home—our roof shall protect her, and her mother, as their’s once protected you.”

Lord Ravenshill bent in very gratitude over the hand which his father at the same moment stretched out to him, and then

with one look towards his mother, quitted the room.

Lady Florence's eyes followed the retreating steps of her brother from the apartment, during the space of some seconds, then a deep sadness came over her aspect, and gathering up her shawl, she turned as if she were also about to depart ; but ere she did so, Lady Chillingworth, who seemed to recover a slight degree of composure as her son left the apartment, walked hastily towards her, clasped her in her embrace, and cried, " Florence,—you are come back to us—you do not quit us again."

" Mother !" exclaimed Florence in a low, broken voice, as those tones of unaccustomed love fell on her ear, and for a moment she tore herself away from her embrace, as if in a dream pushed back the dark braids from her white temples, and gazed at her fixedly with a bewildered air. " Mother ! do you thus speak ?"

And a slight trembling passed over the reed-like, quivering form of the young

widow, and clasping her hands together she held them over her eyes, and seemed to listen for fresh tones of the same kind voice —she heard them not ; but before she again looked up, she felt that she was sobbing on her mother's bosom, clasped in her mother's arms, and as she lay within them, tears fell like Heaven's dew from her burning eye-balls, and she murmured "Forgiven ! forgiven ! dear, dear mother at last !"

And ere many minutes had passed, as in her mother's, so in her father's arms she felt she was forgiven, while the heart felt tones of congratulation uttered by her brother Arthur, added yet another joy to the peace of her heart.

CHAPTER XII.

Je le vis :—

Je sentis le reproche expirer dans ma bouche ;

Je sentis contre moi mon cœur se déclarer ;

J'oubliais ma colere, et ne sus que pleurer.

Iphigénie.—Racine.

IN the little parlour, so often mentioned in the beginning of this volume as the home of the once happy family of the Fieldings, towards the close of a wintry day, sat the still beautiful Frances. Scrupulously and neatly dressed as she was ever wont to be, even since the disastrous change in her circumstances, on the present occasion there seemed nevertheless a greater degree of care

bestowed upon her toilette, than it had for many, many months evinced. A rich silk dress was gathered closely in at the waist and throat, in full soft plaits, and round the delicate little mittened hand two or three splendid bracelets were clasped. The latter articles were presents from Mr. Harvey, and then worn by Mrs. Fielding's express desire to compliment him. It was the closing hours of the last day before the wedding, and Frances, with heavy eyes and saddened heart, sat alone in the little parlour, expecting the arrival of her brother, who having been for some days since released from prison by Mr. Harvey's good offices, had promised to come and see her on the present evening. Mrs. Fielding, being still an invalid, had returned to rest, in order to be able to go through the fatigues of the following day, for, notwithstanding her ill health, she had determined to accompany her daughter to the church. Frances, therefore, sat, alone, musing upon her own thoughts, and Heaven knows! they were bitter enough.

She was about to make a sacrifice which, had it not been for her mother's and brother's sakes, she would never have thought of making ; since it was with many a severe pang of sorrow in her heart, that she gained the strength and calmness requisite to do so. Her fair, waxen cheek had become much paler than of old, her sylph-like figure thinner, during this struggle, on her part, to nerve herself for its performance ; but still she ever tried to appear cheerful, and so gaily smiled, and talked, and laughed, that the mother perceived not the gradual alteration which had taken place in the mien of her child. Sometimes, too, to please Mrs. Fielding, she would speak of the happiness they should have in living once more with the luxuries of wealth around them—of Mr. Harvey's goodness—and then she would seem to take pleasure in the rich jewels which he, day after day, forwarded to her—gauds from which her heart sickened within itself, when she thought that they were the love tokens of one whom she was about to wed, while

her heart was yet sore from the death wound its first love had received.

With no tears then—for she felt she must not let her brother surprise her weeping—with no tears, yet, with a heavy brow, and a heavy heart, she sat a long while, thinking, by the dull glow of a waning fire on the hearth, in the little room we have so often described, and when recalled from her own musings to outer life, she listlessly listened to the hurrying of footsteps, and the noise of the carriages passing the street in which she resided. But, at length, her visions of the future seemed to oppress her with a sense of intolerable misery, and rising from her seat, she approached the window, and looked out upon the crowded thoroughfare below. There the dim gas-lights twinkled through a November fog, and, in its thick darkness, the bewildered pedestrians were hopelessly pushing about ; scarcely, however, had she gazed, for one moment, on the scene described, when a cab, hastily driven up

the street, stopped before the Fieldings' door.

"It is Harry," thought she, as a gentleman, heavily cloaked, stepped out of it, and knocked hurriedly at the door. "He must not find me sitting in the dark, else he will think I have been giving way to some melancholy fancies."

And rapidly walking back to her old seat, she took a lucifer match from a *pastille* burner on the chimney piece, lighted the candles, and then looked round the room, took up her crochet needles to form some occupation, on which she could seem employed when Harry came in. But as she did so, the door opened—she thought she heard her brother's step close to her, and turning round to address him, she looked up, and a white, white look, as of death, passed across her features ; for, in that upward glance, she saw it was not her brother, but Lord Ravenshill, who stood beside her. He was trembling so violently with emotion, that even she seemed more composed

than he did, notwithstanding her whole frame quivered, for some minutes, like a reed—she spoke first, too, for he, though his eyes gradually assumed a look of intense and agonized feeling, he seemed perfectly incapable of uttering a single word.

“ Sidney— Horace — Lord Ravenshill !” Frances exclaimed, and, as she spoke each less familiar appellation, she moved a step or two back, as if his very vicinity was painful to her; then, breathless, for a moment, she glanced rapidly at him, her colour came and went, her soft, violet eyes half closed, and thoughts of his cruelty towards herself, her mother and Harry, sent a flood of bitter reproaches to her mind, but not to her lips—for she had no strength to speak them. She would not have done so, if she could ; since, deep as her indignation was against him, her spirit felt far too proudly gentle to utter one word of complaint. Yet her heart beat rapidly as these thoughts pressed on her

brain, and, suddenly, she again looked towards Horace, and met his earnest, piercing glance—had he repented of his cruelty? had he come here to pray for forgiveness? to throw himself on her compassion? there was pain in his dark eyes—strong pain; such as she had seen there of old, during an hour of his deepest distress. Their look called back strange memories to her heart—it called back the time, when she was his light, his star, his only earthly comfort, when he was the good, the true—was he so no more? had he so changed? She had shed many bitter tears over that change; and as if spell-struck, she now stood with her large, melancholy eyes gazing earnestly, wildly into his, till suddenly her whole countenance changed, the lip and brow relaxed in their lines of pain, the cheek slightly flushed, the eyes grew dim with tears, and she turned away from him. She was thinking of old days, of the possibility of his again becoming what he once had been, and an unbidden tender-

ness melted her soul: memory is but a sorry companion for the miserable, and often leads them to unfitting tenderness, unfitting tears.

"You turn away, Frances; nay listen," began Lord Ravenshill, as he marked the passion of sorrow swaying her.

"Listen?" interrupted she, once more addressing him with her first deathlike look upon her face; "listen?" she continued, trembling, and speaking rather the thoughts that were passing through her mind, than the cold, proud ones she wished to utter—"No, no, why should you pain me more? the only words which need pass between us are words of farewell—what would you else?"

"What would I?" returned Lord Ravenshill; "pardon — forgiveness — life — Frances!"

And he had not the power to say more.

"Pardon? forgiveness?" returned Frances; and a strange look of pain, shrinking pain passed over her features, "I, I pardon—I forgive you—ah! my heart."

And she caught hold of an old chiffonier which stood close to her, leaned on it, to conceal the agitation that shook her whole frame with repeated tremblings, till suddenly recollecting that her brother would soon enter, and dreading the consequences of a meeting between him and Lord Ravenshill—

“Harry will be here soon,” she said—
“leave the room, and the house—he will not forgive as easily as I have done.”

But Horace moved not ; trying to master his overpowering emotion, he stood, for some seconds, in utter silence, then, after a strong effort, succeeding, he eagerly replied—

“All this wretchedness, this misery has originated from a fatal mistake—from a tale, which circumstances forced me to credit—that in the hour of shipwreck, I heard from my brother’s lips—I heard—I believed you loved him.”

Frances Fielding looked up ; tears were yet upon her pallid cheeks ; but her eyes,

for the moment, became brilliant and clear.

“You thought I loved another?” she said, calmly, “you wrote that letter when under a mistake—and *whom* did you say you imagined I loved?”

“Arthur—my brother—”

“Your brother?” she repeated, incredulously, irresolutely, for an instant; then, in another moment, drawing up her slight form into a quiet attitude of proud humility. “Lord Ravenshill,” she added—“you never credited that accusation, even if it was preferred against me—you know I have not the most distant acquaintance with your brother—and such an untruth from you is but adding another insult to the one you were pleased to wound me with some time ago.”

“Nay, hear me out,” Horace exclaimed; “by circumstances—”

“Do what you must feel were better done at once—leave me,” interrupted Frances.

“Not till you have heard me, and are convinced that—although I have acted rashly and blindly—I have not acted basely, as that letter, without an explanation, seems to prove I have done. Frances, you must hear me—as yet you think me still deceiving you—I am not! In a moment of blind rage—in an hour when, through circumstances, which I will hereafter explain, I thought you loved Arthur—my brother—I wrote it. He has your ring—your old cameo ring—he showed it to me.”

“My ring?” she exclaimed, in a tone of deep astonishment.

“Yes; I held it but a short time ago in my hand, saw your name written on it—tell me, for the love of Heaven, whom you gave it to?”

“Gave it to? the old cameo?” echoed Frances, with a gesture of irrepressible indignation. “My Lord,” she said, “I would, at least, frame a story which could have the *seeming* of truth to cover its falseness

—see here!” And she pointed to a ring upon her finger, that was the exact counter part of the one Lord Arthur possessed, paused, for a moment, as Horace, with a wonder-stricken look, examined it, then added, in a calmer voice—“I have suffered this interview to continue too long ; Lord Ravenshill, again I desire your withdrawal. I know not, and I ask not why you now seek me with these renewed professions of affection, for now you are utterly indifferent to me. Nay,” she continued, as she saw he was about to speak, “I will not hear another word ; I have suffered enough in hearing even one falsehood uttered by him, who, in past times, was straightforward and true—I only request you instantly to leave me.”

With a quick gesture of impatience Horace caught her hand in his and gazed stedfastly at the cameo ring, then let it drop and uttered—

“It is a spell—a trick. Frances, answer

me if you would not drive me mad—do you know Annaly Childe?”

Frances Fielding turned away ; she thought his question was merely an idle one to delay the moment of his departure, and silently she moved towards the door ; but he seized her by the folds of her dress, detained her, and repeated it.

“ Annaly Childe ?” she replied, “ the daughter of Mr. Childe, the brewer. She is my cousin.”

A wild look of joy passed over Lord Ravenshill’s face, “ Cousin !” he repeated, “ then, perhaps, the truth may yet be explained. You must—you will forgive me, when you know all.”

“ When I know all ? Do I not know enough ?” replied she, her patience, sorrow, and love, gradually becoming overpowered by the sense of indignation she felt in seeing Lord Ravenshill still presume to remain in her presence. “ Do I not know enough when I know that he, whom I once loved, has forsaken faith, honour, charity,

and has dealt a cruel blow in the cruelest manner possible."

"Listen—hear me!" began Horace; but Frances, not heeding him, spoke passionately.

"Did you think my heart was stone? That affection could be utterly and quietly vanquished by your short missive?"

"Frances—you loved me even after believing me ungrateful."

"Does love ever die an instant death? Yes! I loved you even after that! wildly wished immediate repentance would cancel your unkindness—for oh! I would have given my life to know your letter had not been deliberately written. But now—now, the wish is past; he who could thus causelessly trample down a woman's love, deserves it not. Horace, do you know what a woman's love is? It is the centring of all the energies of heart, soul, and mind, on him she loves—more of idolatry there is in ours than in yours, since our whole being is wrapt up in you—bows down to you. Thus,

thus I loved ; and when I knew your affection for me had passed away, still for some time I loved ; in bitterness, in anger, in grief, it may be ; but still I loved. Time, however, taught me patience—taught me to sever all my thoughts and feelings from you ; and I, at length, judged you justly in my own mind. You now come to me, Lord Ravenshill, with renewed professions of attachment ; once, and for ever, I tell you that I hold them as worthless of one moment's consideration ; even if I were free to receive them, and you were free to offer me all that you could offer, I would not accept them. No," she added, more faintly, as even at that moment an unbidden vision of bliss flitted before her eyes ; "no, not from him who could refuse to succour the brother of my love—who comes here, even now, with a glaring falsehood on his tongue—which even a child could detect—therefore, leave me, Horace—all is ended between us."

Lord Ravenshill, for a moment, stood in

utter silence, ere he answered her, for he felt that the proof of the ring which he had called for in witness of his veracity, had turned against him, and falsified every statement he had hitherto made. A bitter confusion of mind overwhelmed him ; for, although during his quiet drive from Chillingworth Park, he had framed a thousand reasons to convince Frances of his truth, they had soon vanished before the deep agitation he experienced in her presence, and left him powerless and speechless. At length, however, he essayed to address her, and seemed upon the point of doing so, when the door of the apartment opened, and Harry and Mr. Winkelmann walked in.

Greeted with a look of indignant surprise by the two gentlemen who entered, Lord Ravenshill, for an instant, stepped back from the side of Frances, and the quick blood rushed to his cheek. But he soon recovered a portion of his self-possession, met Harry's contemptuous look steadily enough, and appeared upon the point of speaking, when the latter, suddenly turning

from him, walked up to his sister's side—took her arm within his, and suppressing some words which he was about to utter, said in a tone of concentrated passion—

“Your lordship's presence is unwelcome here—you have mistaken time, circumstance, and place—there lies the way out !”

And he pointed to the door.

But Lord Ravenshill did not obey the mandate ; from the first moment of his old friend's entrance he had become more collected in his look and manner ; for a man, be it observed, is always more able to meet the anger of one of his own sex than a woman's ; and Horace's attention being now partially turned from the indignation that he saw Frances felt for him, he met Harry's with comparative self-command. Generally speaking, indeed, both men's and women's dignity never actually suffers so much in quarrelling even with the most indifferent individuals of the opposite sex, as it does with those of their own. Perhaps, in the

woman's case, it may sometimes appear to do so; but it does not so in truth, and the proof of it lies in this, that whereas, two ladies of any degree of kindred will quarrel for six weeks together on any given subject of contention, a lady and gentleman of like relationship, will only quarrel half that time. The above case transposed, will also meet the circumstances of a delectable quarrel between two men—for men, the good creatures! consider it due to their self-respect not to allow their softer feelings to be worked upon by one of their own sex.

Lord Ravenshill's feelings had been rudely shocked by the discovery of the fatal mistake he had made about the mysterious ring, and he appeared confused and almost speechless, when confronted only with Frances—for thoughts of what she must believe him to be, thronged upon his brain, and scattered the reasons with which he would have won her to listen to him. But the entrance of Harry Fielding and

Mr. Winkelmann bade him collect himself, and forced him to conquer his utter weakness, since he knew that irresolution is the last thing a man feels disposed to forgive in another. He moved then quickly forward, as Harry spoke, and said,

“I know all you can tell me—all you can reproach me with; but, ere you do so, grant me one minute’s patient hearing—there was a mistake—”

“A mistake!” impetuously interrupted Harry, in a tone of uncontrollable passion. “The only mistake made, has been made in coming here, since we are neither your dupes nor the patient recipients of the insult, your very presence forces upon us, and—”

“Harry, boy, be quiet,” interrupted the well-known voice of Mr. Winkelmann, “let me speak—let—”

“Quiet sir, quiet?” repeated Harry, “can flesh and blood stand such unparalleled impudence? He, to dare to speak to Frances—to look—”

“Harry, Mr. Winkelmann!” exclaimed

Lord Ravenshill, "you cannot believe that, without supposed provocation—"

"My Lord," interrupted the little doctor, severely, "your absence would be a relief to all parties."

"To the door, Lord Ravenshill," continued Harry, "you tempt me beyond my patience—now, by Heaven—"

"For one moment hear reason."

"Bah! bah! my lord," ejaculated Mr. Winkelmann, "make the best of your way out, and reason as much as you like on the other side of the door."

"Give me time to justify—"

"Present assurance, and past ingratitude, with a blacker touch of both?" said Harry, passionately.

"Do you—can you, believe—"

"Plain facts?" suggested Mr. Winkelmann.

"Do you believe that I rejected the love it has been the task of my life to win?" at last said Horace so vehemently that for a moment he silenced both Harry and Mr. Winkelmann, "I did not, I could not, and

you, sir," continued he, suddenly addressing the latter, "you, who were the only friend I once had, who know me perhaps better than Harry or Frances, might in very charity have given me credit for firmer principles, better feelings, than to imagine aught else but supposed provocation, deep supposed provocation could have made me write that letter. Even then I wrote it not in anger—no, no, only in the bitter anguish of a spirit deceived in the strength of its faith's stronghold. I spared Frances all the reproaches which a baseless belief in her faithlessness called up within me, and in sparing them, perhaps, sealed my own misery, since had I expressed them, they might have led to an enquiry that would have at once destroyed the terrible mistake I so long laboured under."

"Aye, aye!" returned Mr. Winkelmann sarcastically, and before Harry could speak, "there has been a terrible mistake somewhere—a terrible mistake, Si—, I beg your pardon, my lord; but I doubt not the mistake was on our side of the question, not on yours.

And now be wise and follow Harry's advice—make your stay in this room as short as possible, that will be the most agreeable proceeding by which your lordship can at present testify your regard for us."

And the little doctor took a pinch of snuff, which he generally did when in a suppressed rage, or when he felt sentimentally affected.

"Will you not hear reason, truth," still urged Lord Ravenshill.

"Falsehood," interrupted Harry, contemptuously, "falsehood, your lordship means."

And Horace turned from the side of his old friend, and for one moment whitened with anger.

"Pish, pish!" exclaimed Mr. Winkelmann in an irritable tone, "no broils, Harry: long ago you promised me none should take place between you. As for you, my lord," he continued, turning with a severe sneer towards Horace, "if you have any sense of what is due to past circumstances—past gratitude, you will bear this patiently, and

act upon the hint given you for quitting the apartment—Shame should have kept you from entering it.”

“I came here upon the strength of my sister’s intelligence, to explain the rash note I penned under circumstances which might have well induced me to believe that Frances loved elsewhere,” replied Lord Ravenshill, at length exasperated into using the firm, determined tone of a man who intends to make himself heard and understood by the most unreasonable hearer, “and by the right every man has of vindicating his own innocence, before those in whose mind it is aspersed, I will explain it, thoroughly explain it before I leave this room.”

“Fan, my dear,” said Mr. Winkelmann, who now saw that the old, passionate spirit of Lord Ravenshill, tamed down though it had been by years of self-control, was at present likely to assert itself, and awake the farther anger of Harry, “Fan, my dear,” he said, with a kind consideration for his god-daughter’s feelings, “go up stairs, and see if your mother wants you.”

And Frances who had hitherto stood in silence by Harry's side, understanding Mr. Winkelmann's hint, walked towards the door with the intention of quitting the apartment; but before she could do so, Lord Ravenshill suddenly threw himself in her path, and exclaimed—

“No, Frances, no, you shall not leave the room till you have heard me; prejudice, just anger, have hitherto induced you to turn a deaf ear to my entreaties; but you shall not now.”

“Shall not?” repeated Harry, with a flashing eye.

“Shall not,” echoed Horace, firmly, “by the right of what we once were to each other, by the right that the strictest justice would give me of explaining in her hearing an act which has crushed her heart and mine to the dust—she shall not, she will not!”

“Frances,” said Harry, “quit the room.”

But Lord Ravenshill laid his hand upon the lock of the door.

“It may be that all is lost,” he said, “that you can never be mine—that I am doomed as of old to live a bitter life it may be true—too well I know it is true—that you have forgotten me, and will soon wed elsewhere ; but though I feel and know all this, still, I have yet a right to demand a hearing. Listen to me, Frances—I know it is the last time we may ever meet, and knowing it, I will not go from your presence with the black mark of seeming ingratitude still burning in my heart, since to the mad grief now oppressing brain, heart, and life—that would add more strength, more bitterness. I stand, it is true, before you, weighed down by a fault which had it not had provocation, no excuse could palliate. I stand with all my past hopes of bliss stricken down lifeless before me by my own hand ; but, Frances, is no pity to be given to the wretch, who in mad blindness destroys his own happiness, his own life? The contents of the letter you addressed to me I never saw ; I burnt it

before I opened it, because it was given me in a moment of agony, when reason itself was reeling beneath a bitter, bitter sorrow's repeated shocks, because I believed it to be a cancelling of the engagement between us. Frances, you do not know, none can ever know the agony of heart in which that answer was written ; at the supposed death-bed of my only brother, I was told you loved him—"

With one quick stride Harry stepped towards Lord Ravenshill.

"Enough, enough, my lord," he said, "this is incredible—his brother? a man whom we have never seen ; Frances, how can you stand there and listen to such lies ; this passes human patience!"

But not listening to Harry's passionate words, Horace continued—

"Yes, he told me you loved him, showed me the ring which you wear even now. Ask me not why I ever doubted your love—why I believed that strange tale—I only knew and felt my own unworthiness of you—the

possibility of your soon forgetting such a one as I—”

“Do you believe him, Frances, do you believe him?” again interrupted Harry, hastily seizing his sister’s hand, and drawing her away from Lord Ravenshill’s side.

“No!” replied Frances, calmly, as she passed her hand for one moment over her eyes to hide the tears gathering within them, “no, Harry, the cameo ring—no, I do not.”

“You have your answer, Lord Ravenshill,” resumed her brother, “now leave the room.”

Horace stood for a moment irresolute; Mr. Winkelmann, who in his address had partly moved, shuffled up and down the apartment in a state of restless agitation, and Harry pointed to the door. Suddenly gathering up the strength of the last hope within him, Lord Ravenshill again addressed Frances—

“By each hope that ever gilded my life,”

he said, "by that one which made me come hither to explain my past conduct, by every sacred thought that can enter a man's heart, I tell you I never saw the contents of the letter; I believed you loved Arthur."

Frances Fielding turned towards him; the earnest tones of his voice, the bitter grief his words expressed had at length won their way to her heart, and unsettled the anger which had been so long seated there. She laid her hand on her brother's arm, entreatingly she lifted her eyes to his face, and said—

"Harry, let him speak—I wish to know what he has to say in excuse for the past—let him speak."

A look of perplexity dawned over Harry's countenance, for although he also was impressed by the earnestness of Lord Ravenshill's last appeal, and now credited the possibility of his exculpation from the charge of ingratitude, thoughts of his sister's position with Mr. Harvey, and of the latter's expected arrival pressed on his

mind and urged him to hasten Horace's departure.

"Frances," he answered, with some emotion, "it is too late now, at once dismiss him."

"Nay, nay," interrupted Mr. Winkelmann, hastily, with a sudden pang of returning tenderness for his old protégé, "let him speak, and the matter will be the sooner settled. If this wordy dispute is suffered to continue we shall not get rid of him at all."

And Harry, seeing the justice of Mr. Winkelmann's observation, remained silent, while Lord Ravenshill, having at last attained a patient hearing, again addressed Frances, and recapitulated his former tale; but this time more intelligibly. And gradually the truth-like delivery of his narrative won his hearers to believe it; as he spoke, each prejudice vanished, and old affection revived. He told them that his mother and his brother would bear witness to the truth of what he said, that his father had allowed him to seal the sincerity of his

past love by sanctioning it with his consent; he repeated Lady Chillingworth's offer of a home to Frances and Mrs. Fielding, and gradually Harry's brow relaxed in its angry contraction, while that of Mr. Winkelmann wore a glad and satisfied expression as if a great weight had been taken off his good old heart, and when the last word of Horace's explanation had been uttered, he rubbed his hands together with considerable vivacity, and said --

“ Well, well, Sid, I heartily forgive you being the fool you were to believe such a pack of lies ; and downright glad am I, I have not had to repent my former good opinion of you. So it seems, though you don't say so, that your father has come to his senses, and your mother, too. As for Miss Childe's business I can explain that. Her father was a distant relation of Fan's, and his name was originally Fielding but he changed it for his present one when he married his master's daughter. By some people he is still called Fielding, by his own relatives always, and there, no doubt, is

where the mistake respecting the identity of Miss Childe originated—eh, Sid?”

And the little man might have gone on farther with his rather vivacious discourse, had he not suddenly bent his eye on his god-daughter, who, seated in a chair near the table, looked more like a statue than a living being. The sight of her pale face, however, suddenly altered the current of his reflections, and damped his spirits. He thought of her engagement with Mr. Harvey, and he glanced at her and Horace, with a look of grievous disappointment. Harry, too, remained bewildered and silent for some minutes with the strange aspect affairs were taking, and only Horace and Frances spoke.

“Frances,” exclaimed Lord Ravenshill, in those few minutes of silence on the part of Harry and Mr. Winkelmann, “Frances,” he said, and he spoke of hope, though no such feeling existed in his bosom. “All is explained, all believed, and hope is mine once more.”

Frances Fielding looked up from the

ground on which her eyes had for some time been fixed in a sort of stupor.

“All is explained,” she repeated, with effort, “all is believed; but hope may not now be ours. You said your sister told you of our present circumstances—then you must know there is an insurmountable obstacle to our union.”

“Do not for the love of Heaven say so!” returned Lord Ravenshill, “not now—when hope seems at its brightest—not now!”

“Now and for ever, I must say so,” returned Frances, and the tears coursed down her cheeks, “to-morrow, to-morrow—ah! why does Heaven try us so! but my word cannot be broken.”

“Broken!” exclaimed Lord Ravenshill, “it was pledged under a mistake, Frances—your faith was mine—is mine.”

“No, no,” she replied, faintly, “everything at that time was cancelled between us—I am his—by every tie of gratitude with which he has bound me to esteem him—by faith, honour I am his.”

She looked up ; his dark pale cheek was again almost livid with pain, again in his dark eyes dwelt a look of unutterable agony, and words seemed trembling on the ashy lips, that from extreme emotion could not be spoken. She rose up ; she laid her hand upon his arm, gazed for one moment at him, and wept.

“ It must be so,” she said, and she clasped her hands before her face, and spoke hurriedly, “ I am his by all the good he has done ; by the life of the mother whom he has preserved, by the strength of his unshaken love, which has endured through years, and won me at last by its generosity. He is good, he is just—the contract on both sides was justly made—Horace, I cannot be yours—cannot break faith with him.”

“ You must—you will—you are still mine, Frances ; for I broke faith with you but in ignorance of what was really the case,” and, forgetting the presence of her brother, and Mr. Winkelmann, he would

have clasped her in his arms, as if to shield her from the dreaded separation from him ; but she suddenly drew back.

“ To-morrow—within a few hours, I shall be his wife,” she said, gaspingly, “ Horace, the present must annihilate the past. God preserve you—but you and I are nothing to each other now.”

“ Nothing!” echoed Lord Ravenshill, “ Frances, Frances, the devotion of past years, our mutual love even now, makes us all in all to each other. Know you what you have been to me? how your image has haunted me through years, years of patient misery? Taught by the world’s coldness to put no faith in its enjoyments, each feeling of my heart, each thought of my mind was centred upon you. Idolatry—my love was idolatry, and nothing else! Hour by hour, day and night have I thought of you, with all the strength of tenderness a long enduring, only love can give to a man’s heart. Shall the visions framed by such deep affection be now scattered as the base-

less fabrics of my fancy ? by your hand, Frances ? by the hand I thought my own, and deeming it my own, never, never dreamed it would deal out evil to me. Listen ! for the last six months my heart has been wasted to its very innermost core with the burning fires of jealousy, remorse, and love—I come to you now for its death, or life—Frances, give it life—for your love is life to it—has been—say, that it shall ever be so ! I stand at your side pleading I know not how, for I feel the minutes which are flying by, are inevitably bearing us on to happiness or misery—to which, Frances, to which ? Let your own heart speak for me—have I not suffered long ? suffered much ? you know how much—and yet, yet will you make me feel keener, deeper sorrow still ? You weep ; but you do not answer—for Heaven’s sake, be merciful—I cannot bear this long !”

A cold dew as of death was on his brow, and a livid whiteness on his features, as he stood at her side, and Frances turned to-

wards him, clasped her hands together in bitter, earnest supplication, and with her whole frame trembling with an emotion that she could not suppress, said in a low, faltering tone—

“ Merciful ! are you merciful thus to urge me to do—that which my heart, weak even as it is, knows it ought not to do ? though you lay bare every feeling of the past to rend its will to your purpose. Now Heaven grant me strength ! must I hear bitter words from you, after having endured all I have endured. Merciful ? it is you who are merciless to tell me this—now when my brain is reeling, and my spirit fainting within me. Yet, yet I will be stedfast to perform the work of to-morrow—Harry, dearest Harry, take me away—I will leave him—take me away—why should I listen to more bitter words ?—from him, too, the only one I have ever loved, or can love ! ”

And still with her hands clasped over her face, she stepped as she thought to—

wards her brother, leaned upon his arm, and urged him towards the door. But immovable her supporter stood, and then she looked up. A grave, pale face, upon which a withering expression of grief was stealing, drooped over hers, and that face was Mr. Harvey's. He had entered the room unannounced at the moment when Lord Ravenshill, having finished his explanation of his seeming ingratitude, was pleading to Frances to break her contract with him, and the words which he overheard as he did so, coupled with what he had learned from Frances herself, sometime back, made him instantly comprehend the whole scene, which, by a quick and authoritative gesture he forbade either Harry or Mr. Winkelmann to interrupt, for the purpose of declaring his arrival to the lovers, who were then too much engaged with each other to perceive it. And Harry and Mr. Winkelmann, who knew that an explanation of the cause of Lord Ravenshill's present interview with Frances was due to him,

thought the best one they could give, would be to let the feelings of the lovers explain themselves, and accordingly they remained perfectly silent during the few minutes which intervened between Horace's passionate appeal, and the movement of Frances towards her brother. But Mr. Harvey happened to be two or three steps nearer to her than Harry, and thus before the latter could step forward and support her, he was enabled to arrest her progress and draw her towards him. Again she repeated her request to be led from the room, yet still Mr. Harvey stood motionless, and in another moment, and at the same time, as an exclamation of surprise at the sight of a stranger burst from the lips of Lord Ravenshill, she looked up.

She looked up, and shrank back for one instant in fear, then tremblingly and humbly bent her head, as she met his grief-stricken and reproachful glance.

"I keep faith—I have not listened willingly," she gaspingly said, and she laid her hand on her throat to press down the

sense of suffocation which she felt rising there. She stopped, she stepped faltering to his side. "You know all," she murmured faintly—I keep faith—I do not intend to break my promise—I, I do not ask that which in honour I cannot ask—Gratitude is life—I sacrifice more than life—forgive what you have seen—you shall see me otherwise to-morrow!"

Mr. Harvey still uttered not a word, he only gazed at her with a fixed, sad look.

"Frances," he at length mournfully said, "even yet you love—so passionately!"

"Forgive!" she said again, in low, faint tones; "ask my brother—he will tell you how this—this has come to pass—not willingly—oh! not willingly!"

And then, for some moments, both remained perfectly silent, while Lord Ravenshill, like one beneath the influence of the nightmare, that forces you to view a scene before you, without allowing you the power of uttering a single word, stood motionless and speechless, and from strong anxiety and emotion, Mr. Winkelmann and Harry

felt confused and wordless, too. At length, however, without another word, Frances moved towards the door, and Harry sprang to her side; at its threshold, she paused, for a moment, glanced round the room she was leaving, with one quick look, and by that look seemed bewildered, for her hand dropped lifelessly from the lock of the door she held, and with her eyes closed, her bosom heaving, she stood every moment getting paler and paler, till suddenly she uttered some indistinct words, stretched forth her arms towards Lord Ravenshill, and, with a short sigh, fell down insensible at her brother's feet.

Without a single exclamation of grief or impatience, Harry raised his sister from the ground, and bore her from the room. He laid her gently on a sofa, in an adjoining apartment, and, without much reflection, was about to call his mother to her, when, as he walked towards the stairs to do so, Mr. Harvey, who had followed him from the drawing-room, stepped forwards,

and parted the rich flaxen curls that half concealed the pale but exquisite beauty of the features he loved so well, gazed at them fixedly, for a moment or two, then pressed his lips upon the insensible girl's white brow, and turning to Harry, said, in a thick, faltering voice—

“Tell your sister she is free—for worlds I would not wed her now—tell her, too, that I do not part with her in anger—the old, the old ever bear disappointment—the young cannot.”

And in the next moment Mr. Harvey had left the house.

CHAPTER XII.

I, the worn in frame
And heart—what then was I? another, and the
same!

Mrs. Hemans.

WEDDINGS are about the prettiest, most uncomfortable, and singular things imaginable; people cry, laugh, smile, look serious, sentimental, joyous, and reserved, with a sort of railway speed, from one feeling to another, quite astonishing. The principals are extremely to be pitied on that day, an all joyous one, though it may be to them,

for to be stared at, talked to, wept over, and kissed by every old woman or man, from your hundredth cousin up to your great grandmother (if living) cannot be very agreeable to one's feelings. But patience and amiability being the order of the day, of course, the bride and bridegroom are obliged to keep all the little ebullitions of temper such matters excite to themselves, and appear perfect angels of light for the occasion. Did you ever hear of a bride or bridegroom who was not spoken of at the breakfast table, as a faultless pattern of every virtue under the sun ?

That marriage is a lottery, a blind bargain, has been often said ; generally speaking, all ladies and gentlemen blind each other to their mutual faults, and appear in their most amiable colours during the courtship—some of them change sadly afterwards ! It is amusing to watch the intercourse between accredited lovers, in what is called society, how they mutually deceive, till after the marriage takes place, and their masks slip off, and then woe to

the deceived deceivers ! Very delightful, too, it is to analyse the so-called deference which the gentlemen of the present day pay to the softer sex ; for every man when addressing a woman throws into his voice and manner an indescribable, patronizing, reverential, encouraging gentleness, that by an acute observer can be directly noticed, and which easily tells what sex, even an unseen speaker addresses. Patronizing a man's manner is towards a woman, because he is always taught to consider his sex the superior of the two, and from that inculcated opinion imagines the distinction must be morally and intellectually upheld in his own individual and charming person ; therefore, in speaking to her, he assumes an air of condescension—no, not condescension, that is not the exact word—a—a sort of pliant, pliant generosity, which seemingly allows him to forego his loftier impulses, and levels him, for the time being, to her height of understanding. Men reverence women because, taken in the aggre-

gate, they know them to be much less wicked than themselves ; because, too, they possess beauty and grace, and all the softer attributes of humanity in more perfection ; and virtue and beauty being, after gold, some of the things most eagerly admired in this world, they approach the sex supposed to possess the best of these qualities with a sort of secondary worship. Thirdly, a man's manner is encouraging when addressing a woman, because he gives her credit for a great deal of natural timidity ; the lord and master of the world delivers his opinions firmly and easily, because he thinks for himself ; woman feebly and irresolutely, because she acts and thinks by the direction of others ; therefore, the former reckons for a very insipid sort of intercourse with her, unless he can encourage her into a sort of desultory exposition of her feelings and thoughts.

Generally then, men always unconsciously encourage, patronize and reverence the fairer sex ; for that sort of gentleness,

or, at least, difference of manner, which they assume in talking to one of its individuals, can be analysed into nothing, besides these feelings. Of course, they never broadly show them ; they are only indistinctly felt in their behaviour—by the quicker witted. Yet, from this concealment of their real sentiments mischievous effects proceed, for gentlemen do not always keep up that reverential politeness at their own firesides ; the greater part of them put it on for the drawing-room, and when at home, lay it by, (perhaps, to keep it more fresh for its next exhibition). In general society, they appear to worship the pretty and agreeable women, whom they would readily neglect as their sisters or wives, and thus many a young girl is entirely unfitted for the duties she has to perform as a wife, or sister, by the idle worship she meets with abroad, and the comparative neglect she suffers at home.

The customs of society have ordered the men and women into strange relations with each other. The women, like queens, appear

seated on thrones surrounded by clouds which, unless their eyes are exceedingly well exercised to pierce through their false but very gratifying representations of the *tableaux vivans* before them, picture the men as obsequious servants, kneeling at their feet. They fling their light and glittering charms abroad, and seem to enslave their suppliant attendants, but lo! from out of that kneeling crowd, several humble looking individuals offer brilliant rings to the fair creatures they seem to reverence, and the latter, after a little demurring, usually accept them.

But no sooner are they fettered than the slaves they thus distinguished, suddenly assume sovereign authority, become their masters, and the gentle queens bow down before those whom they once commanded; yet they kneel upon their thrones, and from thence they still perceive a crowd of obsequious attendants surround them; now, however, with a keener sight, they gradually pierce the illusive picture, and see that each of their adorers has enchained an in-

dividual of their own sex by the means of the same spell, the golden ring ; and they understand the true worth of their shadowy power.

This is not as it should be ; man and woman should meet on more equal ground ; the lady should descend a little from her dignity before marriage ; the gentleman from his, afterwards, else it is but a cheating bargain, in which the lady, if she does her duty, suffers the most ; for, observe, she is brought up to exact deference from all men in general society—to be, in fact, extremely *exigante* towards them, and more especially towards the lover she accepts as a husband, yet the moment the marriage ceremony is said, then she is expected instantaneously to become a humble, and submissive wife. Now to divinify her before marriage, and to place her in purgatory afterwards, expecting her upon the instant to exhibit the perfections of an angel, while performing the duties of her new situation, is certainly not a very reasonable or humane prevision for her future comfort. It would be better

to let her clearly see her true position in this world, and not thus to dazzle her eyes with the vision of a false homage which has no lasting foundation. And it would be better still if the men were to have the generosity, since in their hands the power lies, and it is they who in the end will freely exert it, it would be better I say, so to suffer woman's mind to be formed that she would not exact such idle worship before marriage, nor meet with so sudden a transition from power to slavery afterwards; for it is the distance between a man's mind and his wife's, that sinks the latter into a mere cipher or household drudge.

Of a rather better character than the generality of every-day matches was that of Lord Ravenshill and Frances Fielding, which took place soon after the very desirable explanation recorded in the last chapter. Their mutual affection having been thoroughly strengthened by the severe trials it had endured, they now seemed assured of as lasting happiness as earth can give. Everything too relating to the ring

had been thoroughly explained by one of the parties interested in that strange circumstance ; for a short time before the ceremony took place, Frances wrote to Annaly Childe, then residing in Ireland with her father, and though not on very intimate terms with her, related how miserably the mystery attached to the ring which Lord Arthur possessed, had influenced her fortune, and begged an explanation of it. This Annaly felt herself obliged to give, when she found how severely her cousin had suffered ; and in answer said that the ring was an old keepsake of their great grandmother, Frances Fielding, who on her death-bed, left directions for each of her two daughters-in-law, to have a ring made in her memory similar to a pattern she described, which request they had obeyed, and the jewels being valuable, had descended with other family property to Frances and herself, till she transferred hers to Lord Arthur. She further explained that the strange circumstance of her having again assumed the long disused

name of Fielding had been occasioned by her happening, at the period in question, to reside with an old aunt, who for the honour of the family, as she said, would persist in calling her by her patronymic name of Frances Fielding—her Christian name being in reality Annaly Frances; and thus it so fell out that Lord Arthur, coupling the name with the circumstance of his having seen her on Harry's arm, during a single visit which she paid Frances three years ago, mistook her for her cousin. Many were the regrets Annaly expressed upon the unhappiness this singular train of incidents had caused Frances, and so evidently did a half revealed tenderness frame the language in which she wrote of Lord Arthur, that Frances, although she had received assurances to the contrary from Horace, who had himself received them from his brother, still believed she loved and thought of him.

But occupied as her mind then was with her own approaching marriage, Frances had

not much time to think of the rather singular romance, in which her grave and sedate cousin had found herself engaged, although in compliment to the readiness with which the latter had explained matters, bearing in so disagreeable a manner upon her own secret feelings, she asked her to be her bridesmaid, and to this request Annaly immediately assented.

Frances was married from a small villa that her godfather who, then unsettled as to where he should reside, and what he should do, had determined to rent for three or four months, and in which he invited Mrs. Fielding and Harry to take up their residence, till they were thoroughly helped out of their pecuniary difficulties with Mr. Harvey and others, by his own generosity. It was a very quiet wedding ; Frances and Lord Ravenshill wished it to be so ; but not the less happy did the absence of show and parade make the bride and bridegroom appear. Lord and Lady Chillingworth and Lady Florence were of course numbered among Mr. Win-

kelmann's guest on this occasion ; the Marquis and the latter having magnanimously resolved to make up their differences for the sake of the couple about to be married. Arthur was not of the wedding party ; he was too ill to join it. The marriage, however, notwithstanding its quietness, passed off exceedingly well. Lord and Lady Chillingworth though they would not amalgamate with people whom they considered so absolutely beneath them, yet contrived to behave with decorous affability ; Mr. Winkelmann threw off a little of his brusquerie, and appeared as docile as a pet lamb, and things progressed in the most exemplary order. Yet it seemed a strange marriage after all ; and the spectators—there are always spectators to a marriage, however secret you may try to keep the matter—the spectators made several remarks upon it. One pitied the bride, who he suspected had been sacrificed by her parents for the sake of the bridegroom's riches—another the gentleman, because he thought that the beautiful girl, with whom he stood at the

altar, had entrapped him into the match—and all wondered how the aristocratic-looking personages, next the communion rail, and who, in fact, were the Marquis and Marchioness of Chillingworth, could sanction it. Certainly, the group in that quiet, little country church did seem a singular one, and might have well called forth some random remarks from the straggling visitors within its walls. There, assembled together, stood the grave, and now quiet Harry Fielding, conversing, at intervals, with the noble-looking Lady Chillingworth, who, with her smile of hauteur partly softened down, leant upon her husband's arm, and glanced ever and anon with some surprise towards Lady Florence, as she stood gently speaking to the unassuming Mrs. Fielding, and the benevolent-looking Mr. Winkelmann. Then a little in advance of the others, stood Annaly Chide, three other bridesmaids, and in the midst of them, the beautiful bride, with her soft robes of India muslin, half concealed by a bridal veil of rich lace, that fastened to a coronet of

white roses, fell over her long flaxen tresses in light folds, while her large, dark, violet eyes were seemingly weighed down by the thick, long, golden lashes which lay upon her peach-tinted cheek ; by her side stood Lord Ravenshill—the plain—the deformed, reserved Lord Ravenshill—who, at the first glance, could possibly deem that love united the two in question ? The spectators did not, for they almost audibly pitied the fair young bride ; the officiating clergyman did not, for he read the service very impressively, till, as he once looked towards Frances, in directing her to speak the fitting vows, he saw her raise her eyes, for a single instant, to the face of the bridegroom, with the soft, veiled glance of faith and love, which the eyes of woman alone can fully express ; and then the old minister, even as he read on, blamed himself, no doubt, for the uncharitable suspicion he had suffered to glance athwart his mind, and for once believed that one woman, at least, could love where the superficial advantages of beauty were not. Man is much mistaken

if he thinks beauty is woman's idol—it is his own.

“My dear Annaly,” said Lady Chillingworth to Miss Childe, as they sat down near one of the windows of Mr. Winkelmann's house, about ten minutes after the bride and bridegroom had started on their tour. “My dear Annaly, I have not had an opportunity of speaking to you since your last visit to Eagle's Nest. You promised, when you left, soon to come and see me again; but you did not do so.”

“I really could not,” replied Annaly, “for I have been travelling with my father in Ireland during the last six months.”

“*Travestié à la paysanne?*” asked Lady Florence; at that moment leaving Mrs. Fielding with whom she had been conversing.

“Even so,” replied Annaly, and she bent down her eyes with a bright blush, for, as she knew from Frances that there had been a strange misunderstanding respecting her identity between the brothers, she thought Lady Chillingworth might have possibly

heard something of her past history. It was not so, however, since Arthur, when thoroughly convinced that Annaly was Miss Childe, had earnestly entreated Horace to conceal the circumstance from his mother, lest she should endeavour to press his suit with her—an idea he could not brook, now that ill-health precluded him from following the career she had pointed out to him. “Even so!” replied Annaly, and Lady Chillingworth rejoined,

“Ah! they perfectly understand why you could not keep your promise ; but, my dear Annaly, come and dine with us to-day, and then we can settle when you shall accompany us to Chillingworth. Mr. Childe is out of town ; therefore you can easily do so. Florence has been wishing to see you these many, many days—and I assure you my son will be quite pleased to see my companion in the storm at Eagle’s Nest.”

Annaly Childe glanced up at her ladyship.

“Does he wish to see me?” she thought,

“does she desire the match to take place between us as of old?”

No ; Lady Chillingworth had not a thought, at present, of her penniless and half-dying son's ever entrapping the young and beautiful heiress before her for his wife ; better feelings than Annaly gave her credit for at that moment animated her heart, and, in fact, she only uttered her present invitation to testify her esteem for her past, courageous kindness towards herself.

“Come, dine with us, for charity's sake,” said Lady Florence, as she listened to her mother's words, “a wedding always makes me feel terribly dull, (poor Lady Florence thought of her own) unless some engagement employs us for the rest of the evening, and we have none to-day, because Arthur has been somewhat worse this week—do come.”

“Well, then, I will,” replied Annaly, with a smile, and soon after, rising from her chair, Lady Chillingworth approached Mrs. Fielding, and with that grace and

affability, which she could well assume when she chose, and which, in fact, the quiet and lady-like manners of the latter readily called forth on her part, entered into conversation with her. Proud people generally like those persons who are neither too obsequious, nor too free ; and as Mrs. Fielding knew how to maintain her own self-respect without encroaching upon her neighbours', she earned Lady Chillingworth's approbation. At length, however, the latter, considering that she had played her part to perfection, as, indeed, she had, for she left Mrs. Fielding quite astonished at her affability, rose, and with her daughter and Annaly Childe, proceeded to take leave of Mr. Winkelmann, and the Fieldings. At her departure, she expressed a courteous wish to see them often at Chillingworth House, which the parties concerned, of course thanked her for, but held at its true value, and intended to avail themselves of as slightly as possible.

"Come, Annaly," said Lady Florence, as she and her friend threw off their bonnets

in the former's room, "now I must go and give Arthur an account of the wedding, and you must aid me in so doing. There will be plenty of time to tell all we have to tell before dinner."

And followed by Annaly, who made not the slightest objection to the proposal, she proceeded down stairs to the library, and entering it, walked straight up to her brother, who was seated in a large arm chair at the further end of the room, with a boy of about fourteen years of age reading aloud to him.

"That is only little Alfred Mortimer," observed Lady Florence to Annaly as they traversed the apartment, "he always comes here to read to Arthur for an hour, when Mr. Carter, his general reader, is away."

And as the ladies walked up to where his lordship sat, the boy, with a school boy's blush, rose, and hastily bowing to them, moved away, and Annaly Childe, after the lapse of three long years, stood once more

in the presence of him she loved most on earth.

What a change had passed over that form and that face since she last parted from him ! The glorious beauty of the splendid countenance had fled ; the features, though still retaining their delicate outlines, were pallid and thin ; the eyes—ah ! the hand of the destroyer had fallen upon them, and powerless alike in their expression, and their sight, they now met hers with a dim, wandering gaze that did not recognise even the features of the being he loved so well. Well might Annaly Childe, as she once more gazed upon the lover of her youth, turn aside to hide the tears which involuntarily coursed down her cheeks ; she had seen him in the shipwreck, pale and lifeless ; but although his danger then struck terror into her soul, it touched her not more deeply than did his wretchedness now. The loss of sight—the gradual but visible wearing down of his health since their former parting ; a calm, patient smile that

dwelt upon his features, and which she had never before seen there, all conspired to excite her feelings painfully and uncontrollably, and while Lady Florence addressed him, she moved away, for tears, that she could not restrain, were falling from her soft, dark eyes.

“Well, Arthur,” begun Lady Florence, in a lively tone, “we are returned at last, and true to my promise, I come to give you an account of the wedding. Moreover, I have brought an old friend of yours to see you—one, whom I don’t believe you have seen since her school-days. She is to aid me in the narrative I am about to begin.”

“And who is the friend who thus favours me?” returned Lord Arthur, “introduce her at once, Florence, and then sit down and tell me how Frances looked, and how the bridesmaids behaved—whether they cried, or whether they smiled, or whether they did both alternately.”

“Now who can say gentlemen are less fond of gossip than ladies?” exclaimed Lady Florence. “How Frances looked?

why most lovely, to be sure—how the bridesmaids behaved? as foolishly, and as prettily as usual. And you want me to introduce my friend to you—well, here she is—there, now, my dear Arthur, you are shaking hands with the very beautiful and much admired Annaly Childe—do not you feel yourself highly honoured?”

Lord Arthur almost started from his chair, as his sister pronounced Annaly's name, dropped the trembling little hand he held in his, and turned whiter than marble, while Annaly, for the moment, utterly unconscious of the surprised and wondering gaze of Lady Florence, leant half lifelessly against the table near her, and wept. Lady Florence was astonished ; well she might be—for she knew nothing of her brother's and Annaly's mutual engagement, and addressing the latter,

“ Arthur,” she exclaimed, “ you are not ill, surely? Annaly, what is—what can be the matter with you?”

Miss Childe did not answer ; in perfect

silence she stood weeping, till suddenly Lord Arthur spoke.

“Annie,” he said, in a shaken voice—
“why come hither to bid me despair? I know all is ended between us, that you are nothing to me now.”

“No, no,” rejoined Annaly, in a low, agitated tone; “you do not, cannot think so.”

The blind man rose hastily from his chair, and leaning upon the back of it, turned eagerly round to where Annaly stood, then stretching forth one hand, into which she placed hers, he drew her towards him.

“Come closer, Annie,” he exclaimed, “I heard not what you said—or, at least, I did not understand it. Have you not changed?”

Lady Florence moved away; with the quick perception inherent in woman, she guessed, from the deep agitation evinced by Annaly and her brother, by the latter’s spoken feelings, that there had been some long estrangement between them; she saw

their hearts were waiting but her absence to pour themselves out in words of forgiveness, affection, or reconciliation, and doing as she would have wished to have been done by, she quietly quitted the room. She thought it was but charity to do so—so it was.

“Is Florence gone?” asked Lord Arthur, as his quick ear discerned the retreating footsteps of his sister, and, for one moment, he listened, heard the door of the apartment opened and closed by her ladyship, then turned again to Annie, and said—

“Annie, my own Annie, you love me yet?”

“Have you thought otherwise?” she rejoined, half reproachfully, as he drew her closer to him, till her head fell on his shoulder.

“Otherwise?” replied Lord Arthur; “what could I think? what can I now think? You do not mean to say, Annie,” continued he, more eagerly; and his whole frame trembled as he pronounced the words

—“you do not mean to say that you would wed me as of old—keep the promise you once gave me—you do not mean that you with riches and beauty for your portion, would now become the bride of one thus helpless, thus sightless?”

She did not utter a single word ; but she gazed, for one moment, on the blind man's face, and raising his hand to her lips, kissed it ; and Lord Arthur's cheek grew white, and he answered with more emotion—

“Annie, I prize your love ; I would give my all on earth still to possess it ; I know its worth ; but I also know, it is not a love which could cling to him, who, if he lives, must live deprived of sight, a weak, idle, helpless load upon others' charity for every enjoyment of life—no, no, yours is a love to hold companionship with one who could tread the path of life firmly—diligently, at least—gloriously, perhaps ; whom your smile might light to *paths* of duty, glory—it must not cling to me ! Now, God forbid that I should link your fate with mine, my own Annie—it would be too miserable,

too wretched a one for so fair a creature as you."

He felt the tears coursing the pale cheek that was resting on his bosom, yet he continued—

"I love you, Annie—Heaven alone knows how much, since it was love of you first guided me on to better energies and hopes than I once cherished—I know and I feel that generosity which, on your part, singled me out, poor as I was, for the husband of your choice, when, in the full strength of youth, I turned vigorously to the right, and hoped to win your regard. But that is of the past now, I am not what I wished to be—and I am resigned to relinquish your love. Your long, long silence, since your last visit to my mother's roof, tells me to do this, Annie, although the hasty words which you uttered but a few moments ago, almost tempted me to hope for the completion of my most selfish desires—my wildest fancies; but they, they, perhaps, were, after all, only the spoken expression of a momentary feeling

of compassion, whose purpose must vanish into nothing when calmly examined, for you think and act calmly, Annie!"

"Yes," returned Annie, after a second's silence, and a slight look of pain, which the blind man did not see, passed over her features; "yes, I ever try to do so; but does thinking and acting calmly quench life's better feelings? Calmly! do you mean my heart would calculate the extent of the sacrifice—yes, sacrifice—that is the word you would have used, Lord Arthur—you are pleased to suppose I should make in wedding you? You have spoken plainly, I will speak plainly, too—When we last parted, did you believe I loved you?"

And her voice trembled as she asked the latter question, and the blind man answered—

"Yes, yes, Annie."

"Then," returned she, more hurriedly, "how could you deem, how can you still deem that love so light, so worthless as to shrink back from pain or grief? We parted—you, with a hope of treading a bet-

ter, brighter path than you had hitherto trod, I, with the hope of seeing you do so. Time passed, I heard of you as one utterly changed—earnestly working, and I felt you were following up the resolutions you told me you were about to listen to, when suddenly, in the midst of the new duties you were striving to perform, you stopped short, fell back, and apparently gave them up for an idle tour on the Continent.”

“Annie, it was not so,” said Lord Arthur—“it was ill health alone made me forsake them.”

“I know it now,” she answered, hastily; “but I knew it not then, the world often speaks falsely—it spoke so of you; and such as I had known you to be in the early days of our acquaintance, I could not entirely disbelieve its reports. Yet I waited a long, long time before I gave them much credence, hoping that you would return to England and silence them, by resuming the duties you had forsaken. You did not; and love, pained in its dearest hopes, sickened beneath the steady progress of its

death blight, till, half-doubting, half-believing, I accepted Lady Chillingworth's invitation to Eagle's-nest that I might know the truth ere you came home, and frame my course accordingly."

"Did you doubt my love, my truth?" exclaimed Lord Arthur, in a hurt tone.

"What reason had I to trust in their stability?" quietly returned Annaly, "was it not a test of time fairly tried that was to make me put faith in them at last! Yes, doubted your love, your truth, when I heard these idle reports of you—I doubted till from Lady Chillingworth's own lips I heard their refutation, and saw it fully confirmed in her fears."

"You still loved me?"

"Loved? how could my heart have been so bitterly pained unless I had loved?" she returned, reproachfully. "Loved? who can ever divine half the agony I suffered on the beach at Eagle's Nest, and during the following day when you lay between life and death—and then, then when by my father's will I was forced to quit the roof

which sheltered you—ah, Heaven! did not my very heart-strings seem to break? Arthur, you do not know how I have loved, nor how I have striven not to give way too much to the hopes, which made me build my every scheme of happiness upon you; lest in some bitter hour I should find them dashed to pieces by your retreat from the path of good. But now, though the trial has been attended with a bitter affliction, still there is happiness in knowing you never swerved from it; still there is happiness in knowing that I may give full vent to the long restrained feelings of my heart—love where I am beloved, and honour him I love.”

She paused for a second; but Lord Arthur did not speak, and she continued—

“I know all now,” she said, “from your sister and from other sources, and feel you have done more than I ever hoped you would do. I know you toiled, till toil wrought its own death blow by arousing the latent symptoms of disease; that you sought for health abroad, and found it not

readily enough to suffer you to resume your former labours ; that a bitterer affliction—even the loss of sight—came soon, and then, then with the world shut out from your view, your hopes, and aspirations blighted, I know your mind yet held its mastery over despair : it never bowed in listlessness, and because it could do but little, did nothing ; it never drew bitters from affliction ; but steadily and patiently, fortifying itself in its own strength, it stood the blow ; and though it mourned over its lost chances of exciting its mightiest powers, still it mourned not idly. Arthur, it was my hope to love you for a better heart and mind than you once possessed—Arthur, Arthur, surely you do not think my love can forsake you now ?”

“ But weakly have I borne the past shock, the present trial,” he answered, “ something have I striven to attain—but not much ; for I thought your dreams and hopes respecting me seemed to point to a brighter path than I can now follow.”

A short, quick sigh was at first her only

reply; then an earnest look of pain again passed over her face; and she said—

“You have misunderstood me, you have imagined I was ambitious—that my ambition centred itself upon you? Arthur, it would have been my pride to follow with the mind and with the heart, him whom I love, to the highest pinnacle of human glory uprightly gained; for to strive for glory, the pure glory of his nature, perfected in self-exertion for the good of his fellow-creatures, man is made. They preach idly, who preach the self-abnegation of humble indolence; let every man strive for the highest knowledge and purest aims he can attain, and let glory won by true humility crown the winners, each and all! Man must do the uttermost he can do to fill the mind and heart with knowledge and wisdom; but for the one whom the will of the Creator, and not his own, severs from the more active paths of life, whom the fiat of the unerring Judge sends to a lonely, sick couch, and deprives of the outer light of life, comparative inertness borne meekly

earns from God and man as true praise, as that accorded to the more actively benevolent of his fellow-creatures. Yes! for when the heart that was yielding fruit to the four-fold is crushed by the hand of the Eternal to test its sweetness; when the mind, after having sent forth its winged thoughts to fructify in glorious deeds, examined by Him, is seen to have sufficiently exerted itself for its purposed plan of life, and suddenly bound down by the growing feebleness of its earthly habitation, uncomplainingly restrains its pantings after knowledge, in lowliness of spirit bends to its doom, then rises the steady patience of the sufferer like pure incense to Heaven, then is Earth's novitiate complete, and the stricken deer nears the covert of safety, through a more painful and praise-claiming path than those of his fellows. Oh! earthly love, imperfect though it is, faltering in its purest strength, weak in its best endeavours, earthly love, if it retains a spark of the light it first received from Heaven, must

need cling to one so tried—cling with a yearning wish to prove its excellence devotion. Earth's glories, bright as they may be, when shared with him who has uprightly attained them, are nothing, nothing to the hope, the happiness of comforting a being so stricken and once loved. Frail, worthless, weak, its loss not worth a sigh or tear, must be the heart that could forsake one so circumstanced—Arthur, say you never thought my love was such love—it is not!”

“Annie, dearest Annie, love like yours is worth more than I can give in return. Yes, I thought it was so—and still, still I dare not think that you, my long loved, long sought, bitterly regretted one, will yet be mine—the sacrifice—”

“Hush, hush,” she said, as she sat down by his side, “no words like those, Arthur, must pass your lips. Sacrifice? what do I sacrifice in fulfilling my heart's best wishes? The chief bliss I prayed for has come to pass—the only drawback to it, is the pain

you must suffer ; but better times may come——”

“ Annie, Annie,” murmured Lord Arthur as for one moment the tears, unbidden, coursed down his cheeks, “ and it was you whom I would have lost—ruined——”

He stopped short. Pale as the hue of death did the flushed cheek of Annaly become as she heard his self-accusing words, and for one moment she half rose from her seat, and stepped two or three paces from him, then in a voice of deeper emotion than she had yet spoken, she came back and said,

“ Arthur—now, for God’s sake, let the past be buried in oblivion—never speak of it more!”

There were some few more words, loving words passed between them, then Annaly began to think of Lady Florence’s absence, and of what her comments would be upon her own singular meeting with Lord Arthur, and after some moments of confused reflection, she was about to rise and seek her,

when, very opportunely, Lady Florence re-entered the library. She had been sitting with a great deal of impatience in the drawing-room, wondering over the strange circumstances of the very interesting little drama she had witnessed, and calculating by the time-piece how many minutes she ought to allow the lovers to effect the completion of the explanation which she had seen was likely to take place between them. Having concluded, after sundry musings upon the subject, that half-an-hour was more than enough, at the expiration of that time she quietly walked back to the library, to ask its *denouément*. And this she very soon obtained; but not from Annaly, for as soon as her brother heard her enter the apartment, he guessed on what errand she came, called her to him, and while Annaly profited by the good opportunity thus afforded her of escaping from the room, he succinctly related the whole truth to her.

“Strange, most strange!” exclaimed Lady Florence, as Arthur finished his recital,

“who would have given Annaly credit for so much romance? what will mama say, when she hears of it?”

Lady Chillingworth said everything that was to be expected she would say, and much more. She shed some tears of real, unaffected delight over Arthur when she thought of the brilliant establishment that, by his wife, he would necessarily have notwithstanding his present bitter affliction; inwardly she blessed Annaly over and over again, for the truth of her love towards her son; outwardly she was most condescendingly kind to her, though she was too proud, even yet, to show much of her elation, at the unexpected success of her long cherished schemes, to the commoner's daughter, whom after all she thought honoured by an alliance with her family. Finally she wondered whether Mr. Childe would approve of it.

Mr. Childe did approve of it: he had long since known and sanctioned the conditional engagement that existed between Annaly and Lord Arthur; for the former told him of it, when she renewed her ac-

quaintance with his lordship after their first estrangement at D——. Mr. Childe had full trust in his daughter's discretion ; he knew she would marry no one whom she could not esteem, and seeing how deeply she loved Lord Arthur he suffered her to have her own way in this matter. He was not a covetous or unfeeling man, and though essentially severe he could be lenient towards the sanguine hopes of love, when not cherished weakly or irrationally, he was so towards his daughter's. He suffered her to wait till Lord Arthur had rendered himself really worthy to receive her hand, and when he heard he was so, notwithstanding the dull prospects some persons might have presaged for such a match, he freely gave his consent to it.

The marriage was settled ; the marriage took place, and people wondered over Annaly Childe's choice of a husband, set the matter down as a nine day's wonder, then let the married couple drop into that quiet seclusion which generally attends all persons who do not make surprising efforts

on the patience, love, or admiration of their cotemporaries—and what efforts could Annaly or her husband make? The latter had to exert all his newly acquired energy of character in bearing the bitter affliction with which it had pleased Providence to visit him, the former by the quiet of the home hearth, had to watch over, tend and soothe the fainting frame, yet vigorous mind of the husband she loved so truly. But they were happy, happy in the truth of each other's love.

And with the same depth of happiness, though not in the same quiet solitude passed the married life of Lord and Lady Ravenshill; a far brighter path seemed marked out for them than for the Lovaines; for the original, self taught genius of Horace, reflected as it was in the quiet graces and imitative mind of his young and beautiful wife, shed a halo of glory round it, which rendered it both happy and brilliant. The storm clouds for ever passed away from the horizon of their fate, and the sunshine that has succeeded them was lasting and glorious.

The Chillingworth family, so everybody said, had formed strange alliances, whose real circumstances remaining partially unknown, were much wondered at; but strange as seemed the marriages of Arthur and Horace, every one thought they were surpassed by the extraordinary one which Lady Florence Lovaine with the full consent of her parents effected five years after. The bridegroom she chose was certainly connected with the family; yet, assuredly, not the one that her friends thought she would have chosen after her first escapade. The bridegroom, in fact, was Harry Fielding; who, having forsaken the common law for the bar, by the value of his aristocratic connections, which, however, he did not take much trouble to cultivate, was then a flourishing young barrister of two and-thirty. It was in the twenty-eighth year of her age that Florence Lovaine stood, for a second time, at the altar, still beautiful and young; and yet, although beautiful and young, and highly descended as she was, she still thought herself inferior

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to the honest-hearted man whom she had chosen for her second husband—still thought herself happy in having won his heart—and so she was ; for the passionate generosity of her character, swayed as it so often was towards the wrong by sudden impulse, could not be advantageously compared with the calm, reflective cast of his. She thought right then, and she loved her husband accordingly : in marriage, it is always best that the wife should not have the superior mind of the two—equal let her be—but not superior—since, as the husband's mind is generally thought to lead the wife's—hers, if superior, must be naturally cramped when in collision with, and in subjection to, a narrow one.

About ten days after that wedding, the following conversation took place in the lobby of the House of Commons, between two gentlemen.

“ And so Lovaine has again taken his seat for D——,” said one of them,

“since when, has he recovered his health and sight?”

“Oh! his health about a year back—his sight these two years,” replied his companion; “but he did not enter on public life till he felt perfectly able to cope with the fatigue.”

“Humph,” rejoined the other, “well I scarcely believed he would be good for any thing, notwithstanding the rather sensible *debut* he made some years ago; but people say his wife has somewhat changed him—is that true?”

“Most decidedly not,” returned the second speaker. “Lady Lovaine is far too quiet and unassuming a woman, to have attempted guiding or swaying a will as firm as Lovaine’s. He is under no petticoat government, I assure you.”

“No! well, such was the rumour I heard some time ago.”

“Aye, some time ago it must have been, for nothing of the kind is spoken of now. Come with me to Hartnell Court, and you shall judge for yourself. Lovaine ruled by

his wife, indeed ! the idea is ridiculous. Not but that they are a very happy couple—theirs was a love match, I believe.”

And the friend of the last speaker did go to Hartnell Court—did become acquainted with Annaly and her husband ; and, at once, gave up the idea of the former’s, in the slightest degree, influencing Arthur’s word, for there was that tacit sort of deference in her manner towards him, which always exists where love is founded on esteem, and which seemed effectually to preclude the possibility of her doing so. In very fact, she did not, for Arthur’s was, after all, the highest mind of the two ; she had only taught him by that wisdom which is inherent in woman, to turn its energies in the right direction ; and, after having seen it fully and powerfully acting, then, with the deep, but quiescent love of woman, hers had followed in its wake. But even this was not known save to herself and him—for what woman, if she had one particle of love for her husband, would show her power, abilities, or goodness at his expense ? A

woman who openly governs her husband, lessens him in the eyes of her friends; and in lessening him, although she may not know it, she assuredly lessens herself.

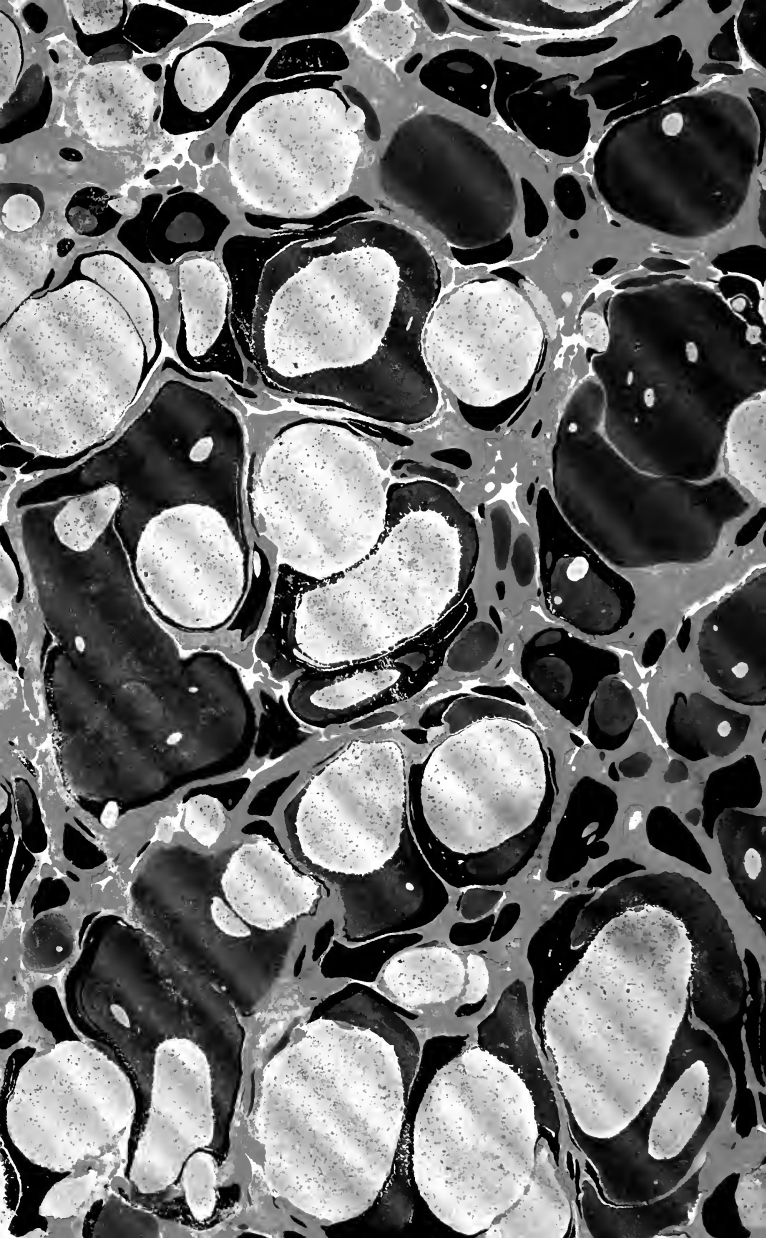
And now, most courteous reader—for most courteous is the reader who peruses a novel conscientiously through to the very end—what have I to tell?

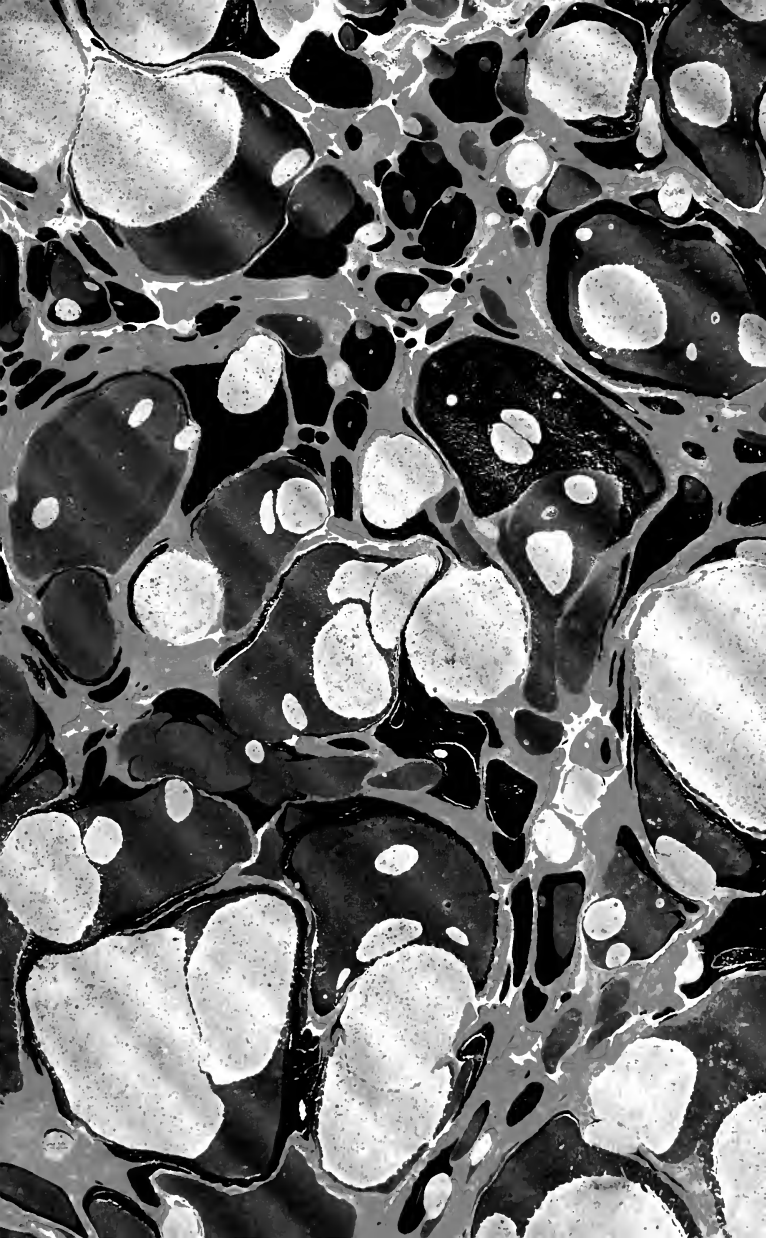
The Ravenshills and Lovaines are still living as happily as ever; kind, old Mr. Winkelmann dwells at peace with the Marquis, and is thoroughly beloved by Frances, Horace, Lady Florence, and Harry; Mrs. Fielding, with no cares or sorrows to weigh her down, is quickly recovering her health, and Lord and Lady Chillingworth, proud of their two talented sons, and much the better in heart for their past disasters, entertain a sincere, but it may be still a condescending regard for all the members of the Fielding family.











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